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A RAZOR! SURE! I'M TAKING HER TO THE TRAIN..SHE'S A PIP
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IT'S A THIN GILLETTE AND I'VE USED IT PLENTY TOO!
YOU WON'T FORGET THE GRAND JURY HEARING NEXT WEEK?
WILL YOU MEET MY TRAIN?
HE'S SWELL-LOOKING
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VOL. 8 — OCTOBER, 1946 — No. 1

Book-Length Novel

The Island of Dr. Moreau — **H. G. Wells** — 8

When a horror legend became a hideous reality—on a desert island where strange creatures lived like men—and died like beasts!

Magazine reprint right purchased through A. P. Watt, London, England.

Novelettes

Third Person Singular — **Clemence Dane** — 64

Madly, they fled, like frightened children, Lord Babyon and his lady, from an avenging ghost, all oblivious that their enemy rode with them, content —to wait. . . .

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Daemon — **C. L. Moore** — 98

For such as Luiz o Bobo the powers of ancient earth will gather when his cry for help is heard . . . but only for such as he, who have no souls—who can see the dainty hoofs of Pan and can hear the strange and terrible music of his pipes. . . .

The Burial of the Rats — **Bram Stoker** — 112

Swiftly, silently, his unseen enemies closed in around him in the inky darkness, a cordon of death marked out in sinister, shapeless shadows—awaiting the signal to spring. . . .

Published by arrangement with George Routledge and Sons, London, England.

The Readers' Viewpoint — 6

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Cover and inside illustrations by Lawrence and Finlay.

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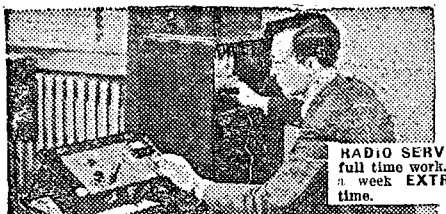

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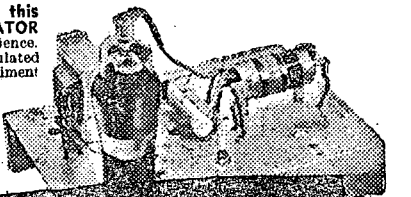

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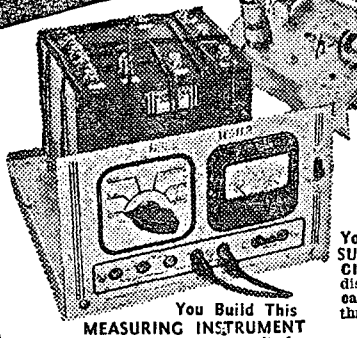

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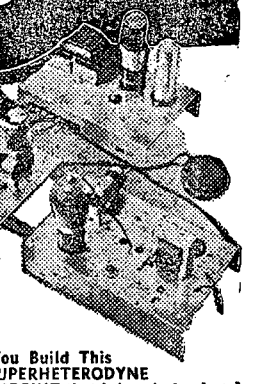

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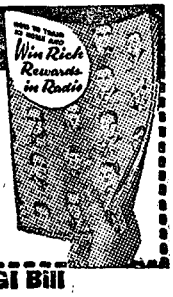

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The Readers' Viewpoint

Address comments to the Letter Editor, Famous Fantastic Mysteries, All-Fiction Field, Inc., 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, New York

WELCOME HOME, FINLAY!

Dear Editor:

After a period of three years (the all-encompassing Army, of course) I have returned to my old love, F.F.M., beginning with the February issue of this year.

What prompted me to write was the letter from Virgil Finlay in the June issue of F.F.M. giving us happy fans the info that he will soon be out of the Army and ready to come up with those superb illustrations of his again. Right here and now I am tendering my plea for you to grab hold of him and bring him to the pages of our mag.

Your present illustrator, Lawrence, is plenty O.K. with me; his "pics" for "The Undying Monster" are especially magnificent but still I prefer the haunting ethereal quality and attention to textural detail of the master Finlay, particularly in his depiction of human characters.

To my knowledge, Finlay's work has been primarily confined to the "pulps", and I cannot understand why the big firms and book publishers have not used him, not that I'm belittling pulp mags—far from it. All of us true fantasites are fully aware of the wealth of fantasy classics presented to us during the last few years, especially through the efforts of F.F.M.

Now for some words of praise for F.F.M. My hearty thanks for publishing "The Willows" by Blackwood and "The Novel of the Black Seal" by Arthur Machen. When can we expect more by Machen, particularly "The Great God Pan"?

I'm sorry I missed the issue of your mag containing "The Ancient Allan" by Haggard. I would like to see "She" come to its pages also. Then to have Finlay's interpretation of the woman Ayesha would be too much.

Some info for fellow fantasy fans: I have a complete set of Lovecraftia (Arkham House) including the out-of-print "Outsider and Others" and "Beyond the Wall of Sleep", besides numerous of his works in various pulps, anthologies, pocket-books, etc. I have extra copies of A. Merritt's "Moon Pool", "Face in the Abyss", "Dwellers in the Mirage", "Creep, Shadow!" and others.

If someone will find me any or all of the following, "The Ship of Ishtar", "Three Lines of Old French", "Through the Dragon Glass", "Woman of the Wood", and "Rhythm of the Spheres", to complete my Merritt collection, I may be induced to part with these above-mentioned most-prized possessions. Write me. I have a wide variety of fantasy.

A word of thanks to F.F.M. for bringing us little-known but excellent fantasy classics, a plea for a monthly magazine, and I eagerly await the August issue.

TONY RAINES.

R.F.D. No. 1
Lone Wolf, Okla.

LAWRENCE PICS FINE

June F.F.M. was a memorable issue. "The Undying Monster" was superb. I had been wanting to read it, and was therefore delighted to hear it would appear this time.

If fulfilled all my expectations. This type of psychological story is very welcome in this age of fictional bogey men and fire-breathing dragons. I hope you will print more of this type.

However, for your featured novelette, how about not using stories which are so easily obtainable already? One story above all others I would like to see printed is H. P. Lovecraft's "At the Mountains of Madness." While this first appeared in a magazine, it looks like you could compromise this time, for few stories or novels are more difficult to obtain at this time.

I would like to issue the following statement to all fans in North Carolina: Stf and fantasy fans in the old North State are banding together to form a statewide organization. Get in on the ground floor for we want to start as soon as possible, and we need members to do this. North Carolina need not remain "The Forgotten State of Fandom" any longer. It's up to you, and you owe it to yourself to look into it further. So if you don't want to miss a lot of activity that will benefit you, be sure to immediately contact Fred Ross Burgess, Aycock 115, Chapel Hill, N. C.

In closing, Lawrence's cover was the best he's ever done and his illustrations the best in any current magazine.

ANDY LYON.

200 Williamsboro St.,
Oxford, N. C.

A CHILLER AND A DILLER

First I'd like to compliment you on another unusually fine issue. "The Undying Monster" was a chiller and Machen's novel was a diller.

After listening to the same old and rather tiresome conversation about the sad state of this world, it is a pleasure indeed to settle back with a copy of F.F.M and visit strange new lands of eerie beauty and wonderful adventure.

Even the radio doesn't carry any fantasy programs to speak of. They don't even make

(Continued on page 97)

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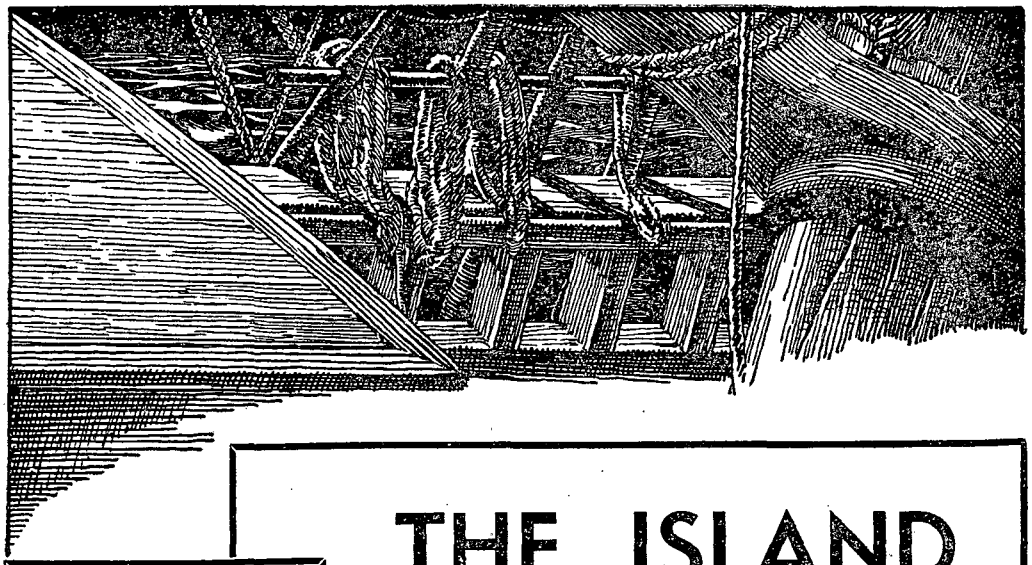

When a horror legend became a hideous reality—on a desert island where strange creatures lived like men—and died like beasts!

THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU

By H. G. Wells

Introduction

ON FEBRUARY the First, 1887, the *Lady Vain* was lost by collision with a derelict when about the latitude 1°S. and longitude 107°W.

On January the Fifth, 1888—that is eleven months and four days after—my uncle, Edward Prendick, a private gentleman, who certainly went aboard the *Lady Vain* at Callao, and who had been considered drowned, was picked up in latitude 5°3'S. and longitude 101° W. in a small open boat of which the name was illegible but which is supposed to have belonged to the missing schooner *Ipecacuanha*. He gave such a strange account of himself that he was supposed demented. Subsequently he alleged that his mind was a blank from the moment of his escape from the *Lady Vain*. His case was discussed among psychologists at the time as a curious instance of the lapse of memory consequent upon physical and mental stress. The following narrative was found among his papers by the undersigned, his nephew and heir, but unaccompanied by any definite request for publication.

That night I had some very unpleasant dreams.

The only island known to exist in the

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region in which my uncle was picked up is Noble's Isle, a small volcanic islet and uninhabited. It was visited in 1891 by H.M.S. *Scorpion*. A party of sailors then landed, but found nothing living thereon except certain curious white moths, some hogs and rabbits, and some rather peculiar rats. So that this narrative is without confirmation in its most essential particular. With that understood, there seems no harm in putting this strange story before the public in accordance, as I believe, with my uncle's intentions. There is at least this much in its behalf: my uncle passed out of human knowledge about latitude 5°S. and longitude 105°E., and reappeared in the same part of the ocean after a space of eleven months.

In some way he must have lived during the interval. And it seems that a schooner called the *Ipecacuanha* with a drunken captain, John Davies, did start from Africa with a puma and certain other animals aboard in January, 1887, that the vessel was well known at several ports in the South Pacific, and that it finally disappeared from those seas (with a considerable amount of copra aboard), sailing to its unknown fate from Bayna in December, 1887, a date that tallies entirely with my uncle's story.

Charles Edward Prendick.

CHAPTER I

THE STRANGE FACE

I DO NOT propose to add anything to what has already been written concerning the loss of the *Lady Vain*. As every one knows, she collided with a derelict when ten days out from Callao. The longboat, with seven of the crew, was picked up eighteen days after by H. M. gunboat *Myrtle*, and the story of their terrible privations has become quite as well known as the far more horrible *Medusa* case. But I have to add to the published story of the *Lady Vain* another, possibly as horrible and far stranger. It has hitherto been supposed that the four men who were in the dingy perished, but this is incorrect. I have the best of evidence for this assertion: I was one of the four men.

But in the first place I must state that there never were *four* men in the dingy—the number was three. Constans, who was "seen by the captain to jump into the gig," (*Daily News*, March 17, 1887) luckily for us and unluckily for himself did not reach us. He came down out of the tangle of ropes under the stays of the smashed bowsprit, some small rope caught his heel as he let go, and he hung for a moment head downward, and then fell and struck a block of spar floating in the water. We pulled towards him, but he never came up.

I say luckily for us he did not reach us, and I might almost say luckily for himself; for we had only a small breaker of water and some soddened ship's biscuits with us, so sudden had been the alarm, so unprepared the ship for any disaster. We thought the people on the launch would be better provisioned (though it seems they were not) and we tried to hail them. They could not have heard us, and the next morning when the drizzle cleared—which was not until past midday—we could see nothing of them. We could not stand up to look about us, because of the pitching of the boat. The two other men who had escaped so far with me were a man named Helmar, a passenger like myself, and a seaman whose name I don't know—a short sturdy man, with a stammer.

We drifted famishing, and, after our water had come to an end, tormented by an intolerable thirst, for eight days altogether. After the second day the sea subsided slowly to a glassy calm. It is quite impossible for the ordinary reader to imagine those eight days. He has not, luckily for himself, anything in his memory to imagine with. After the first day we said little to one another, and lay in our places in the boat and stared at the horizon, or watched, with eyes that grew larger and more haggard every day, the misery and weakness gaining upon our companions. The sun became pitiless. The water ended on the fourth day, and we were already thinking strange things and saying them with our eyes; but it was, I think, the sixth before Helmar gave voice to the thing we had all been thinking.

I remember our voices were dry and thin, so that we bent towards one another and spared our words. I stood out against it with all my might, was rather for scuttling the boat and perishing together among the sharks that followed us; but when Helmar said that if his proposal was accepted we should have drink, the sailer came round to him.

I would not draw lots however, and in the night the sailor whispered to Helmar again and again, and I sat in the bows with my clasp-knife in my hand, though I doubt if I had the stuff in me to fight;

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and in the morning I agreed to Helmar's proposal, and we handed halfpence to find the odd man. The lot fell upon the sailor; but he was the strongest of us and would not abide by it, and attacked Helmar with his hands. They grappled together and almost stood up. I crawled along the boat to them, intending to help Helmar by grasping the sailor's leg; but the sailor stumbled with the swaying of the boat, and the two fell upon the gunwale and rolled overboard together. They sank like stones. I remember laughing at that, and wondering why I laughed. The laugh caught me suddenly like a thing from without.

I lay across one of the thwarts for I know not how long, thinking that if I had the strength I would drink sea-water and madden myself to die quickly. And even as I lay there I saw, with no more interest than if it had been a picture, a sail come up towards me over the sky-line. My mind must have been wandering, and yet I remember all that happened, quite distinctly. I remember how my head swayed with the seas, and the horizon with the sail above it danced up and down; but I also remember as distinctly that I had a persuasion that I was dead, and that I thought what a jest it was that they should come too late by such a little to catch me in my body.

For an endless period, as it seemed to me, I lay with my head on the thwart watching the schooner (she was a little ship, schooner-rigged fore and aft) come up out of the sea. She kept tacking to and fro in a widening compass, for she was sailing dead into the wind. It never entered my head to attempt to attract attention, and I do not remember anything distinctly after the sight of her side until I found myself in a little cabin aft. There's a dim half-memory of being lifted up to the gangway, and of a big red countenance covered with freckles and surrounded with red hair staring at me over the bulwarks. I also had a disconnected impression of a dark face, with extraordinary eyes, close to mine; but that I thought was a nightmare, until I met it again. I fancy I recollect some stuff being poured in between my teeth; and that is all.

THE cabin in which I found myself was small and rather untidy. A youngish man with flaxen hair, a bristly straw-colored moustache, and a dropping nether lip, was sitting and holding my wrist. For a minute we stared at each other without speaking. He had watery gray eyes, oddly void of expression. Then just overhead came a sound like an iron bedstead being knocked about, and the low angry growling of some large animal. At the same time the man spoke. He repeated his question—

"How do you feel now?"

I think I said I felt all right. At the same time my eye caught my hand, thin so that it looked like a dirty skin-purse full of loose bones, and all the business of the boat came back to me.

"Have some of this," said he, and gave me a dose of some scarlet stuff, iced.

It tasted like blood, and made me feel stronger.

"You were in luck," said he, "to get picked up by a ship with a medical man aboard." He spoke with a slobbering articulation, with the ghost of a lisp.

"*What ship is this?*" I said slowly, hoarse from my long silence.

"It's a little trader from Arica and Callao. I never asked where she came from in the beginning—out of the land of born fools, I guess. I'm a passenger myself from Arica. The silly ass who owns her—he's captain too, named Davies—he's lost his certificate, or something. You know the kind of man—calls the thing the *Ipecacuanha*, of all silly, infernal names; though when there's much of a sea without any wind, she certainly acts according."

(Then the noise overhead began again, a snarling growl and the voice of a human being together. Then another voice, telling some "Heaven-forsaken idiot" to desist.)

"You were nearly dead," said my interlocutor. "It was a very near thing, indeed. But I've put some stuff into you now. Notice your arm's sore? Injections. You've been insensible for nearly thirty hours."

I thought slowly. (I was distracted now by the yelping of a number of dogs.) "Am I eligible for solid food?" I asked.

"Thanks to me," he said. "Even now the mutton is boiling."

"Yes," I said with assurance, "I could eat some mutton."

"But," said he with a momentary hesitation, "you know *I'm dying to hear* of how you came to be alone in that boat. *Damn that howling!*" I thought I detected a certain suspicion in his eyes.

He suddenly left the cabin, and I heard him in violent controversy with some one, who seemed to me to talk gibberish in response to him. The matter sounded as

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though it ended in blows, but in that I thought my ears were mistaken. Then he shouted at the dogs, and returned to the cabin.

"Well?" said he in the doorway. "You were just beginning to tell me."

I told him my name, Edward Prendick, and how I had taken to Natural History as a relief from the dullness of my comfortable independence.

He seemed interested in this. "I've done some science myself. I did my Biology at University College—getting out the ovary of the earthworm and the radula of the snail, and all that. Lord! It's ten years ago. But go on! go on! tell me about the boat."

He was evidently satisfied with the frankness of my story, which I told in concise sentences enough, for I felt horribly weak; and when it was finished he reverted at once to the topic of Natural History and his own biological studies. He began to question me closely about Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street. "Is Caplatzi still flourishing? What a shop that was!" He had evidently been a very ordinary medical student, and drifted incontinently to the topic of the music halls. He told me some anecdotes. "Left it all," he said, "ten years ago. How jolly it all used to be! But I made a young ass of myself—played myself out before I was twenty-one. I daresay it's all different now. But I must look up that ass of a cook, and see what he's done to your mutton."

The growling overhead was renewed, so suddenly and with so much savage anger that it startled me. "What's that?" I called after him, but the door had closed. He came back again with the boiled mutton, and I was so excited by the appetizing smell of it that I forgot the noise of the beast that had troubled me.

After a day of alternate sleep and feeding I was so far recovered as to be able to get from my bunk to the scuttle, and see the green seas trying to keep pace with us. I judged the schooner was running before the wind. Montgomery—that was the name of the flaxen-haired man—came in again as I stood there, and I asked him for some clothes. He lent me some duck things of his own, for those I had worn in the boat had been thrown overboard. They were rather loose for me, for he was large and long in his limbs. He told me casually that the captain was three-parts drunk in his own cabin. As I assumed the clothes, I began asking him some questions about the destination of the ship. He said the ship was bound to Hawaii, but that it had to land him first.

"Where?" said I.

"It's an island, where I live. So far as I know, it hasn't got a name."

He stared at me with his nether lip drooping, and looked so willfully stupid of a sudden that it came into my head that he desired to avoid my questions. I had the discretion to ask no more.

WE LEFT the cabin and found a man at the companion obstructing our way. He was standing on the ladder with his back to us, peering over the combing of the hatchway. He was, I could see, a misshapen man, short, broad, and clumsy, with a crooked back, a hairy neck, and a head sunk between his shoulders. He was dressed in dark blue serge, and had peculiarly thick, coarse, black hair. I heard the unseen dogs growl furiously, and forthwith he ducked back—coming into contact with the hand I put out to fend him off from myself. He turned with animal swiftness.

In some indefinable way the black face thus flashed upon me shocked me profoundly. It was a singularly deformed one. The facial part projected, forming something dimly suggestive of a muzzle, and the huge half-open mouth showed as big white teeth as I had ever seen in a human mouth. His eyes were bloodshot at the edges, with scarcely a rim of white round the hazel pupils. There was a curious glow of excitement in his face.

"Confound you!" said Montgomery. "Why the devil don't you get out of the way?"

The black-faced man started aside without a word. I went on up the companion, staring at him instinctively as I did so. Montgomery stayed at the foot for a moment. "You have no business here, you know," he said in a deliberate tone. "Your place is forward."

The black-faced man cowered. "They—won't have me forward." He spoke slowly, with a queer, hoarse quality in his voice.

"Won't have you forward!" said Montgomery, in a menacing voice. "But I tell you to go!" He was on the brink of saying something further, then looked up at me suddenly and followed me up the ladder.

I had paused halfway through the hatchway, looking back, still astonished beyond measure at the grotesque ugliness of this black-faced creature. I had never beheld such a repulsive and extraordinary

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face before, and yet—if the contradiction is credible—I experienced at the same time an odd feeling that in some way I *had* already encountered exactly the features and gestures that now amazed me. Afterwards it occurred to me that probably I had seen him as I was lifted aboard; and yet that scarcely satisfied my suspicion of a previous acquaintance. Yet how one could have set eyes on so singular a face and yet have forgotten the precise occasion, passed my imagination.

Montgomery's movement to follow me released my attention, and I turned and looked about me at the flush deck of the little schooner. I was already half prepared by the sounds I had heard for what I saw. Certainly I never beheld a deck so dirty. It was littered with scraps of carrot, shreds of green stuff, and indescribable filth. Fastened by chains to the mainmast were a number of grisly staghounds, who now began leaping and barking at me, and by the mizzen a huge puma was cramped in a little iron cage far too small even to give it turning room. Farther under the starboard bulwark were some big hutches containing a number of rabbits, and a solitary llama was squeezed in a mere box of a cage forward. The dogs were muzzled by leather straps. The only human being on deck was a gaunt and silent sailor at the wheel.

The patched and dirty spankers were tense before the wind, and up aloft the little ship seemed carrying every sail she had.

"Is this an ocean menagerie?" said I.

"Looks like it," said Montgomery.

"What are these beasts for? Merchandise, curios? Does the captain think he is going to sell them somewhere in the South Seas?"

"It looks like it, doesn't it?" said Montgomery, and turned towards the wake again.

Suddenly we heard a yelp and a volley of furious blasphemy from the companion hatchway, and the deformed man with the black face came up hurriedly. He was immediately followed by a heavy red-haired man in a white cap. At the sight of the former the staghounds, who had all tired of barking at me by this time, became furiously excited, howling and leaping against their chains. The black hesitated before them, and this gave the red-haired man time to come up with him and deliver a tremendous blow between the shoulder-blades. The poor devil went down like a felled ox, and rolled in the dirt right among the furiously excited dogs.

Montgomery gave an angry exclamation, and went striding down the deck, and I followed him. The black-faced man scrambled up and staggered forward, going and leaning over the bulwark by the main shrouds, where he remained, panting and glaring over his shoulder at the dogs. The red-haired man laughed a satisfied laugh.

"Look here, Captain," said Montgomery, with his lisp a little accentuated, gripping the elbows of the red-haired man, "this won't do!"

With a sudden movement the captain shook his arm free, and after two ineffectual attempts stuck his freckled fists into his side pockets.

"That man's a passenger," said Montgomery. "I'll advise you to keep your hands off him."

For a minute, alcoholic fumes kept the captain speechless. "Blasted Sawbones!" was all he considered necessary to say.

I could see that Montgomery had one of those slow, pertinacious tempers that will warm day after day to a white heat, and never again cool to forgiveness; and I saw too that this quarrel had been some time growing. "The man's drunk," said I, perhaps officiously; "you'll do no good."

"My ship," began the captain, waving his hand unsteadily towards the cages, "was a clean ship. Look at it now!" It was certainly anything but clean. "Crew," continued the captain, "clean, respectable crew."

"You agreed to take the beasts."

"I wish I'd never set eyes on your infernal island. What the devil—want beasts for on an island like that? Then, that man of yours—understood he was a man. He's a lunatic; and he hadn't no business aft. Do you think the whole damned ship belongs to you?"

"Your sailors began to haze the poor devil as soon as he came aboard."

"That's just what he is—he's a devil! an ugly devil! My men can't stand him. *I* can't stand him. None of us can't stand him. Nor *you* either!"

Montgomery turned away. "*You* leave that man alone, anyhow," he said, nodding his head as he spoke.

But the captain meant to quarrel now. He raised his voice. "If he comes this end of the ship again I'll cut his insides out, I tell you. Cut out his blasted insides! Who are *you*, to tell *me* what *I'm* to do? I tell you I'm captain of this ship—captain and owner. I'm the law here, I

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tell you—the law and the prophets. I bargained to take a man and his attendant to and from Arica, and bring back some animals. I never bargained to carry a mad devil and a silly Sawbones, a . . ."

Well, never mind what he called Montgomery. I saw the latter take a step forward, and interposed. "He's drunk," said I. The captain began some abuse even fouler than the last. "Shut up!" I said, turning on him sharply, for I had seen danger in Montgomery's white face. With that I brought the downpour on myself.

THAT night land was sighted after sundown, and the schooner hove to. Montgomery intimated that was his destination. It was too far to see any details; it seeemd to me then simply a low-lying patch of dim blue in the uncertain blue-gray sea. An almost vertical streak of smoke went up from it into the sky. The captain was not on deck when it was sighted. After he vented his wrath on me he had staggered below, and I understand he went to sleep on the floor of his own cabin.

The mate practically assumed the command. He was the gaunt, taciturn individual we had seen at the wheel. Apparently he was in an evil temper with Montgomery. He took not the slightest notice of either of us. We dined with him in sulky silence, after a few ineffectual efforts on my part to talk. It struck me too that the men regarded my companion and his animals in a singularly unfriendly manner. I found Montgomery very reticent about his purpose with these creatures, and about his destination; and though I was sensible of a growing curiosity as to both, I did not press hm.

We remained talking on the quarter deck until the sky was thick with stars.

Montgomery produced some cigars. He talked to me of London in a tone of half-painful reminiscence, asking all kinds of questions about changes that had taken place. He spoke like a man who had loved his life there, and had been suddenly and irrevocably cut off from it.

To tell the truth I was not curious to learn what might have driven a young medical student out of London. I have an imagination.

Over the taffrail leaned a silent black figure, watching the stars. It was Montgomery's strange attendant. It looked over its shoulder quickly with my movement, then looked away again.

It may seem a little thing to you, perhaps, but it came like a sudden blow to me. The only light near us was a lantern at the wheel. The creature's face was turned for one brief instant out of the dimness of the stern towards this illumination, and I saw that the eyes that glanced at me shone with a pale-green light. I did not know then that a reddish luminosity, at least, is not uncommon in human eyes. The thing came to me as stark inhumanity. That black figure with its eyes of fire struck down through all my adult thoughts and feelings, and for a moment the forgotten horrors of childhood came back to my mind. Then the effect passed as it had come. An uncouth black figure of a man, a figure of no particular import, hung over the taffrail against the starlight, and I found Montgomery was speaking to me.

"I'm thinking of turning in, then," said he, "if you've had enough of this."

I answered him incongruously. We went below, and he wished me good-night at the door of my cabin.

I dreamed strange things that night and in the early morning (it was the second morning after my recovery, and I believe the fourth after I was picked up) I awoke through an avenue of tumultuous dreams—dreams of guns and howling mobs—and became sensible of a hoarse shouting above me. I was aware that the ship was being suddenly brought around, and I jumped into my clothes and went on deck.

As I came up the ladder I saw against the flushed sky—for the sun was just rising—the broad back and red hair of the captain, and over his shoulder the puma spinning from a tackle rigged on to the mizzen spanker-boom.

The poor brute seemed horribly scared, and crouched in the bottom of its little cage.

"Overboard with 'em!" bawled the captain. "Overboard with 'em! We'll have a clean ship soon of the whole bilin' of 'em."

He stood in my way, so that I had perforce to tap his shoulder to come on deck. He came round with a start, and staggered back a few paces to stare at me. It need no expert eye to tell that the man was still drunk.

"Hullo!" said he, stupidly; and then with a light coming into his eyes, "Why, it's Mister—Mister?"

"Prendick," said I.

"Pendick be damned!" said he. "Shut-up—that's your name. Mister Shut-up."

It was no good answering the brute;

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but I certainly did not expect his next move. He held out his hand to the gangway by which Montgomery stood talking to a massive gray-haired man in dirty-blue flannels, who had apparently just come aboard.

"That way, Mister Blasted Shut-up! That way!" roared the captain.

MONTGOMERY and his companion turned as he spoke.

"What do you mean?" I said.

"That way, Mister Blasted Shut-up—that's what I mean! Overboard, Mister Shut-up—and sharp! We're cleaning the ship out—cleaning the whole blessed ship out; and overboard you go!"

I stared at him dumbfounded. Then it occurred to me that it was exactly the thing I wanted. The lost prospect of a journey as sole passenger with this quarrelsome sot was not one to mourn over. I turned towards Montgomery.

"Can't have you," said Montgomery's companion, concisely.

"You can't have me!" said I, aghast. He had the sqaurest and most resolute face I ever set eyes upon.

"Look here," I began, turning to the captain.

"Overboard!" said the captain. "This ship ain't for beasts and cannibals and worse than beasts, any more. Overboard you go, Mister Shut-up. If they can't have you, you goes overboard. But, anyhow, you go—with your friends. I've done with this blessed island for evermore, amen! I've had enough of it."

"But, Montgomery," I appealed.

He distorted his lower lip, and nodded his head hopelessly at the gray-haired man beside him, to indicate his powerlessness to help me.

"I'll see you, presently," said the captain.

Then began a curious three-cornered altercation. Alternately I appealed to one and another of the three men—first to the gray-haired man to let me land, and then to the drunken captain to keep me aboard. I even bawled entreaties to the sailors. Montgomery said never a word, only shook his head. "You're going overboard, I tell you," was the captain's refrain. "Law be damned! I'm king here." At last I must confess my voice suddenly broke in the middle of a vigorous threat. I felt a gust of hysterical petulance, and went aft and stared dismally at nothing.

Meanwhile the sailors progressed rapidly with the task of unshipping the packages and caged animals. A large launch, with two standing lugs, lay under the lea of the schooner; and into this the strange assortment of goods were swung. I did not then see the hands from the island that were receiving the packages, for the hull of the launch was hidden from me by the side of the schooner. I felt all the wretcheder for the lack of a breakfast. Hunger and a lack of blood-corpuscles take all the manhood from a man.

Presently that work was finished, and then came a struggle. I was hauled, resisting weakly enough, to the gangway. Even then I noticed the oddness of the brown faces of the men who were with Montgomery in the launch; but the launch was now fully laden, and was shoved off hastily. A broadening gap of green water appeared under me, and I pushed back with all my strength to avoid falling headlong. The hands in the launch shouted derisively, and I heard Montgomery curse at them; and then the captain, the mate, and one of the seamen helping him, ran me aft towards the stern.

The dingey of the *Lady Vain* had been towing behind; it was half full of water, had no oars, and was quite unvictualled. I refused to go aboard her, and flung myself full length on the deck. In the end, they swung me into her by a rope (for they had no stern ladder) and then they cut me adrift. I drifted slowly from the schooner. In a kind of stupor I watched all hands take to the rigging, and slowly but surely she came round to the wind; the sails fluttered, and then bellied out as the wind came into them. I stared at her weather-beaten side heeling steeply towards me; and then she passed out of my range of view.

I did not turn my head to follow her. At first I could scarcely believe what had happened. I crouched in the bottom of the dingey, stunned, and staring blankly at the vacant, oily sea. Then I realized that I was in that little hell of mine again, now half-swamped; and looking back over the gunwale, I saw the schooner standing away from me, with the red-haired captain mocking at me over the taffrail, and turning towards the island saw the launch growing smaller as she approached the beach.

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CHAPTER II

THE LOCKED DOOR

BUT the islanders, seeing that I was really adrift, took pity on me. I drifted very slowly to the eastward, approaching the island slantingly; and presently I saw, with hysterical relief, the launch come round and return towards me. She was heavily laden, and I could make out as she drew nearer Montgomery's white-haired, broad-shouldered companion sitting cramped up with the dogs and several packing-cases in the stern sheets. This individual stared fixedly at me without moving or speaking.

The black-faced cripple was glaring at me as fixedly in the bows near the puma. There were three other men besides—three strange brutish-looking fellows, at whom the staghounds were snarling savagely. Montgomery, who was steering, brought the boat by me, and rising, caught and fastened my painter to the tiller to tow me, for there was no room aboard.

I had recovered from my hysterical phase by this time, and answered his hail, as he approached, bravely enough. I told him the dingey was nearly swamped, and he reached me a piggin. I was jerked back as the rope tightened between the boats. For some time I was busy bailing.

It was not until I had got the water under (for the water in the dingey had been shipped; the boat was perfectly sound) that I had leisure to look at the people in the launch again.

The white-haired man I found was still regarding me steadfastly, but with an expression, as I now fancied, of some perplexity. When my eyes met his, he looked down at the staghound that sat between his knees. He was a powerfully-built man, as I have said, with a fine forehead and rather heavy features; but his eyes had that odd drooping of the skin above the lids which often comes with advancing years, and the fall of his heavy mouth at the corners gave him an expression of pugnacious resolution. He talked to Montgomery in a tone too low for me to hear.

From him my eyes traveled to his three men; and a strange crew they were. I saw only their faces, yet there was something in their faces—I knew not what—that gave me a queer spasm of disgust. I looked steadily at them, and the impression did not pass, though I failed to see what had occasioned it. They seemed to me then to be brown men; but their limbs were oddly swathed in some thin, dirty, white stuff down even to the fingers and feet: I never have seen men so wrapped up before, and women so only in the East. They wore turbans too, and thereunder peered out their elfin faces at me—faces with protruding lower-jaws and bright eyes.

They had lank black hair, almost like horsehair, and seemed as they sat to exceed in stature any race of men I have seen. The white-haired man, who I knew was a good six feet in height, sat a head below any one of the three. I found afterwards that really none were taller than myself; but their bodies were abnormally long, and the thigh-part of the leg short and curiously twisted. At any rate, they were amazingly ugly, and over the heads of them under the forward lug peered the black face of the man whose eyes were luminous in the dark.

As I stared at them, they met my gaze; and then first one and then another turned away from my direct stare, and looked at me in an odd, furtive manner. It occurred to me that I was perhaps annoying them, and I turned my attention to the island we were approaching.

It was low, and covered with thick vegetation—chiefly a kind of palm, that was new to me. From one point a thin white thread of vapor rose slantingly to an immense height, and then frayed out like a down feather. We were now within the embrace of a broad bay flanked on either hand by a low promontory. The beach was of dull-gray sand, and sloped steeply up to a ridge, perhaps sixty or seventy feet above the sea level, and irregularly set with trees and undergrowth. Halfway up was a square enclosure of some grayish stone, which I found subsequently was built partly of coral and partly of pumiceous lava. Two thatched roofs peeped from within this enclosure. A man stood awaiting us at the water's edge.

I fancied while we were still far off that I saw some other and very grotesque-looking creatures scuttle into the bushes upon the slope; but I saw nothing of these as we drew nearer. This man was of a moderate size, and with a black negroid face. He had a large, almost lipless, mouth, extraordinary lank arms, long thin feet, and bow-legs, and stood with his heavy face thrust forward staring at us. He was dressed like Montgomery and his white-haired companion, in jacket and trousers of blue serge. As we came still nearer, this individual began to run to and fro on the beach.

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AT A word of command from Montgomery, the four men in the launch sprang up, and with singularly awkward gestures struck the lugs. Montgomery steered us round and into a narrow little dock excavated in the beach. Then the man on the beach hastened towards us. This dock, as I call it, was really a mere ditch, just long enough at this phase of the tide to take the longboat. I heard the bows ground in the sand, staved the dingey off the rudder of the big boat with my piggin, and freeing the painter, landed. The three muffled men, with the clumsiest movements, scrambled out upon the sand, and forthwith set to landing the cargo, assisted by the man on the beach. I was struck especially by the curious movements of the legs of the three swathed and bandaged boatmen—not stiff they were, but distorted in some odd way, almost as if they were jointed in the wrong place. The dogs were still snarling, and strained at their chains after these men, as the white-haired man landed with them. The three big fellows spoke to one another in odd guttural tones. Montgomery, having unshipped the rudder, landed

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likewise, and all set work at unloading.

Presently the white-haired man seemed to recollect my presence, and came up to me.

"You look," said he, "as though you had scarcely breakfasted." His little eyes were a brilliant black under his heavy brows. "I must apologize for that. Now you are our guest, we must make you comfortable—though you are uninvited, you know." He looked keenly into my face. "Montgomery says you are an educated man, Mr. Prendick; says you know something of science. May I ask what that signifies?"

I told him I had spent some years at the Royal College of Science, and had done some researches in biology under Huxley. He raised his eyebrows slightly at that.

"That alters the case a little, Mr. Prendick," he said, with a trifle more respect in his manner. "As it happens, we are biologists here. This is a biological station—of a sort." His eye rested on the men in white who were busily hauling the puma, on rollers, towards the walled yard. "I and Montgomery, at least," he added. Then, "When you will be able to get away, I can't say. We're off the track to anywhere. We see a ship once in a twelvemonth or so."

He left me abruptly, and went up the beach past this group, and I think entered the enclosure. The other two men were with Montgomery, erecting a pile of small packages on a low-wheeled truck. The llama was still on the launch with the rabbit hutches; the staghounds were still lashed to the thwarts. The pile of things completed, all three men laid hold of the truck and began shoving the ton-weight or so upon it after the puma. Presently Montgomery left them, and coming back to me held out his hand.

"I'm glad," said he, "for my own part. That captain was a silly ass. He'd have made things lively for you."

"It was you," said I, "that saved me again."

"That depends. You'll find this island an infernally rum place, I promise you. I'd watch my goings carefully, if I were you. *He . . .*" He hesitated, and seemed to alter his mind about what was on his lips. "I wish you'd help me with these rabbits," he said.

His procedure with the rabbits was singular. I waded in with him, and helped him lug one of the hutches ashore. No sooner was that done that he opened the door of it, and tilting the thing on one end turned its living contents out on the ground. They fell in a struggling heap one on the top of the other. He clapped his hands, and forthwith they went off with that hopping run of theirs, fifteen or twenty of them I should think, up the beach.

"Increase and multiply, my friends," said Montgomery. "Replenish the land. Hitherto, we've had a certain lack of meat here."

As I watched them disappearing, the white-haired man returned with a brandy-flask and some biscuits. "Something to go on with, Prendick," said he, in a far more familiar tone than before. I made no ado, but set to work on the biscuits at once, while the white-haired man helped Montgomery to release about a score or more of the rabbits. Three big hutches, however, went up to the house with the puma. The brandy I did not touch, for I have been an abstainer from my birth.

THE reader will perhaps understand that at first everything was so strange about me, and my position was the outcome of such unexpected adventures, that I had no discernment of the relative strangeness of this or that thing. I followed the llama up the beach, and was overtaken by Montgomery, who asked me not to enter the stone enclosure. I noticed then that the puma in its cage and the pile of packages had been placed outside the entrance to this quadrangle.

I turned and saw that the launch had now been unloaded, run out again, and was being beached, and the white-haired man was walking towards us. He addressed Montgomery.

"And now comes the problem of this uninvited guest. What are we to do with him?"

"He knows something of science," said Montgomery.

"I'm itching to get to work again—with this new stuff," said the white-haired man, nodding towards the enclosure. His eyes grew brighter.

"I daresay you are," said Montgomery, in anything but a cordial tone.

"We can't send him over there, and we can't spare the time to build him a new shanty; and we certainly can't take him into our confidence just yet."

"I'm in your hands," said I. I had no idea of what he meant by "over there."

"I've been thinking of the same things," Montgomery answered. "There's my room with the outer door . . ."

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"That's it," said the elder man, promptly, looking at Montgomery; and all three of us went towards the enclosure. "I'm sorry to make a mystery, Mr. Prendick; but you'll remember you're uninvited. Our little establishment here contains a secret or so, is a kind of Blue-Beard's chamber, in fact. Nothing very dreadful, really, to a sane man; but just now, as we don't know you . . ."

"Decidedly," said I, "I should be a fool to take offense at any want of confidence."

He twisted his heavy mouth into a faint smile—he was one of those saturnine people who smile with the corners of the mouth down—and bowed his acknowledgement of my complaisance. The main entrance to the enclosure we passed; it was a heavy wooden gate, framed in iron and locked, with the cargo of the launch piled outside it, and at the corner we came to a small doorway I had not previously observed. The white-haired man produced a bundle of keys from the pocket of his greasy blue jacket, opened this door and entered.

His keys, and the elaborate locking-up of the place even while it was still under his eye, struck me as peculiar. I followed him, and found myself in a small apartment, plainly but not uncomfortably furnished, and with its inner door, which was slightly ajar, opening into a paved courtyard. This inner door Montgomery at once closed.

A hammock was slung across the darker corner of the room, and a small unglazed window defended by an iron bar looked out towards the sea.

This the white-haired man told me was to be my apartment; and the inner door, which "for fear of accidents," he said, he would lock on the other side, was my limit inward. He called my attention to a convenient deck-chair before the window, and to an array of old books—chiefly, I found, surgical works and editions of the Latin and Greek classics (languages I cannot read with any comfort), on a shelf near the hammock. He left the room by the outer door, as if to avoid opening the inner one again.

"We usually have our meals in here," said Montgomery, and then, as if in doubt, went out after the other. "Moreau!" I heard him call, and for the moment I do not think I noticed. Then as I handled the books on the shelf it came up in consciousness: Where had I heard the name of Moreau before? I sat down before the window, took out the biscuits that still remained to me, and ate them with an excellent appetite. Moreau!

Through the window I saw one of those unaccountable men in white, lugging a packing-case along the beach. Presently the window-frame hid him. Then I heard a key inserted and turned in the lock behind me. After a little while I heard through the locked door the noise of the staghounds, that had now been brought up from the beach. They were not barking, but sniffing and growling in a curious fashion. I could hear the rapid patter of their feet, and Montgomery's voice soothing them.

I was very much impressed by the elaborate secrecy of these two men regarding the contents of the place, and for some time I was thinking of that and of the unaccountable familiarity of the name of Moreau; but so odd is the human memory that I could not then recall that well-known name in its proper connection. From that my thoughts went to the indefinable queerness of the deformed man on the beach. I never saw such a gait, such odd motions as he pulled at the box. I recalled that none of these men had spoken to me, though most of them I had found looking at me at one time or another in a peculiarly furtive manner, quite unlike the frank stare of your unsophisticated savage. Indeed, they had all seemed remarkably taciturn, and when they did speak, endowed with very uncanny voices. What was wrong with them? Then I recalled the eyes of Montgomery's ungainly attendant.

Just as I was thinking of him he came in. He was now dressed in white, and carried a little tray with some coffee and boiled vegetables thereon. I could hardly repress a shuddering recoil as he came, bending amiably, and placed the tray before me on the table. Then astonishment paralyzed me. Under his stringy black locks I saw his ear; suddenly close to my face. The man had pointed ears, covered with a fine black fur!

"Your breakfast, sair," he said.

I stared at his face without attempting to answer him. He turned and went towards the door, regarding me oddly over his shoulder. I followed him out with my eyes; and as I did so, by some odd trick of unconscious cerebration, there came surging into my head the phrase, "The Moreau Hollows"—was it? "The Moreau. . . ." Ah! It sent my memory back ten years. "The Moreau Horrors!" The phrase drifted loose in my mind for a

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moment, and then I saw it in red lettering on a little buff-colored pamphlet, to read which made one shiver and creep. Then I remembered distinctly all about it. That long-forgotten pamphlet came back with startling vividness to my mind. I had been a mere lad then, and Moreau was, I suppose, about fifty—a prominent and masterful physiologist, well-known in scientific circles for his extraordinary imagination and his brutal directness in discussion.

Was this the same Moreau? He had published some very astonishing facts in connection with the transfusion of blood, and in addition was known to be doing valuable work on morbid growths. Then suddenly his career was closed. He had to leave England. A journalist obtained access to his laboratory in the capacity of laboratory-assistant, with the deliberate intention of making sensational exposures; and by the help of a shocking accident (if it was an accident) his gruesome pamphlet became notorious. On the day of its publication a wretched dog, flayed and otherwise mutilated, escaped from Moreau's house. It was in the silly season, and a prominent editor, a cousin of the temporary laboratory-assistant, appealed to the conscience of the nation. It was not the first time that conscience has turned against the methods of research.

I felt convinced that Moreau must be the same man. Everything pointed to it. It dawned upon me to what end the puma and the other animals—which had now been brought with other luggage into the enclosure behind the house—were destined; and a curious faint odor, the halitus of something familiar, an odor that had been in the background of my consciousness hitherto, suddenly came forward into the forefront of my thoughts. It was the antiseptic odor of the dissecting-room. I heard the puma growling through the wall, and one of the dogs yelped as though it had been struck.

Yet surely, and especially to another scientific man, there was nothing so horrible in vivisection as to account for this secrecy; and by some odd leap in my thoughts the pointed ears and luminous eyes of Montgomery's attendant came back again before me with the sharpest definition. I stared before me out at the green sea, frothing under a freshening breeze, and let these and other strange memories chase one another through my mind.

What could it mean? A locked enclosure on a lonely island, a notorious vivisector, and these crippled and distorted men?

MONTGOMERY interrupted my tangle of mystification and suspicion about one o'clock, and his grotesque attendant followed him with a tray bearing bread, some herbs and other eatables, a flask of whiskey, a jug of water, and three glasses and knives. I glanced askance at this strange creature, and found him watching me with his queer, restless eyes. Montgomery said he would lunch with me, but that Moreau was too preoccupied with some work to come.

"Moreau!" said I. "I know that name."

"The devil you do!" said he. "What an ass I was to mention it to you! I might have thought. Anyhow, it will give you an inkling of our—mysteries. Whiskey?"

"No, thanks; I'm an abstainer."

"I wish I'd been. But it's no use locking the door after the steed is stolen. It was that infernal stuff which led to my coming here—that, and a foggy night. I thought myself in luck at the time, when Moreau offered to get me off. It's queer—"

"Montgomery," said I, suddenly, as the outer door closed, "why has your man pointed ears?"

"Damn!" he said, over his first mouthful of food. He stared at me for a moment, and then repeated, "Pointed ears?"

"Little points to them," said I, as calmly as possible, with a catch in my breath; "and a fine black fur at the edges?"

He helped himself to whiskey and water with great deliberation. "I was under the impression—that his hair covered his ears."

"I saw them as he stooped by me to put that coffee you sent me on the table. And his eyes shine in the dark."

By this time Montgomery had recovered from surprise of my question. "I always thought," he said deliberately, with a certain accentuation of his flavoring of lisp, "that there *was* something the matter with his ears, from the way he covered them. What were they like?"

I was persuaded from his manner that this ignorance was a pretense. Still, I could hardly tell the man that I thought him a liar. "Pointed," I said; "rather small and furry—distinctly furry. But the whole man is one of the strangest beings I ever set eyes on."

A sharp, hoarse cry of animal pain came from the enclosure behind us. Its depth and volume testified to the puma. I saw Montgomery wince.

"Yes?" he said.

"Where did you pick up the creature?"

"San Francisco. He's an ugly brute, I admit. Half-witted, you know. Can't re-

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member where he came from. But I'm used to him, you know. We both are. How does he strike you?"

"He's unnatural," I said. "There's something about him—don't think me fanciful, but it gives me a nasty little sensation, a tightening of my muscles, when he comes near me. It's a touch—of the diabolical, in fact."

Montgomery had stopped eating while I told him this. "Rum!" he said. "*I* can't see it." He resumed his meal. "I had no idea of it," he said, and masticated. "The crew of the schooner must have felt it the same. Made a dead set at the poor devil. You saw the captain?"

Suddenly the puma howled again, this time more painfully. Montgomery swore under his breath. I had half a mind to attack him about the men on the beach. Then the poor brute within gave vent to a series of short, sharp cries.

"Your men on the beach," said I; "what race are they?"

"Excellent fellows, aren't they?" said he, absent-mindedly, knitting his brows as the animal yelled out sharply.

I said no more. There was another outcry worse than the former. He looked at me with his dull gray eyes, and then took some more whiskey. He tried to draw me into a discussion about alcohol, professing to have saved my life with it. He seemed anxious to lay stress on the fact that I owed my life to him.

Presently our meal came to an end; the misshapen monster with the pointed ears cleared the remains away, and Montgomery left me alone in the room again. All the time he had been in a state of ill-concealed irritation at the noise of the vivisected puma. He had spoken of his odd want of nerve, and left me to the obvious application.

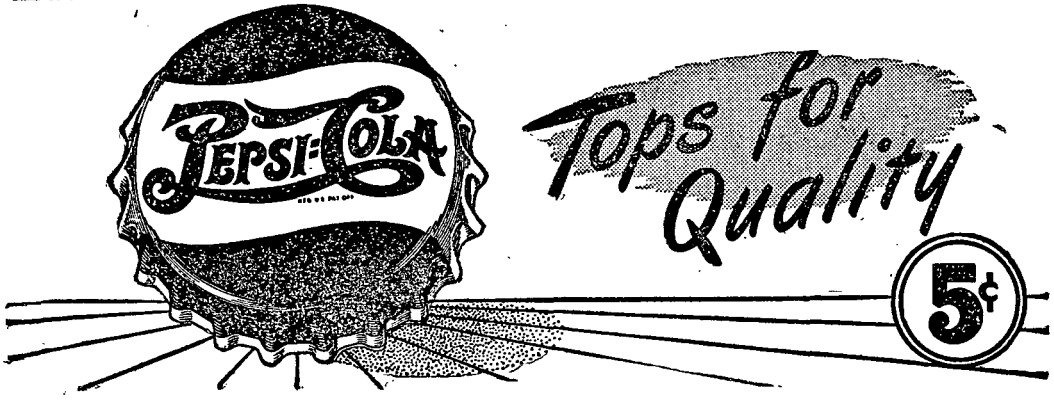
I found myself that the cries were singularly irritating, and they grew in depth and intensity as the afternoon wore on. They were painful at first, but their constant resurgence at last altogether upset my balance. I flung aside the crib of Horace I had been reading, and began to clench my fists, to bite my lips, and to pace the room.

Presently I got to stopping my ears with my fingers.

The emotional appeal of those yells grew upon me steadily, grew at last to such an exquisite expression of suffering that I could stand it in that confined room no longer. I stepped out of the door into the slumberous heat of the late afternoon, and walking past the main entrance—locked again, I noticed—turned the corner of the wall.

The crying sounded even louder out of doors. It was as if all the pain in the world had found a voice. Yet had I known such pain was in the next room, and had it been dumb, I believe—I have thought since—I could have stood it well enough. It is when suffering finds a voice and sets our nerves quivering that this pity comes troubling us. But in spite of the brilliant sunlight and the green fans of the trees waving in the soothing sea-breeze, the world was a confusion, blurred with drifting black and red phantasms, until I was out of earshot of the house in the checkered wall.

I STRODE through thhe undergrowth that clothed the ridge behind the house, scarcely heeding whither I went, passed on through the shadow of a thick cluster of straight-stemmed trees beyond it, and so presently found myself some way on the other side of the ridge, and descending towards a streamlet that ran through a nar-



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row valley. I paused and listened. The distance I had come, or the intervening masses of thicket, deadened any sound that might be coming from the enclosure. The air was still. Then with a rustle a rabbit emerged, and went scampering up the slope before me. I hesitated, and sat down in the edge of the shade.

The place was a pleasant one. The rivulet was hidden by the luxuriant vegetation of the banks save at one point, where I caught a triangular patch of its glittering water. On the farther side I saw through a bluish haze a tangle of trees and creepers, and above these again the luminous blue of the sky. Here and there a splash of white or crimson marked the blooming of some trailing epiphyte. I let my eyes wander over this scene for a while, and then began to turn over in my mind again the strange peculiarities of Montgomery's man. But it was too hot to think elaborately, and presently I fell into a tranquil state midway between dozing and waking.

From this I was aroused, after I know not how long, by a rustling amidst the greenery on the other side of the stream. For a moment I could see nothing but the waving summits of the ferns and reeds. Then suddenly upon the bank of the stream appeared Something—at first I could not distinguish what it was. It bowed its round head to the water, and began to drink. Then I saw it was a man, going on all-fours like a beast. He was clothed in bluish cloth, and was of a copper-colored hue, with black hair. It seemed that grotesque ugliness was an invariable character of these islanders. I could hear the suck of the water at his lips as he drank.

I leaned forward to see him better, and a piece of lava, detached by my hand, went pattering down the slope. He looked guiltily up, and his eyes met mine. Forthwith he scrambled to his feet, and stood wiping his clumsy hand across his mouth and regarding me. His legs were scarcely half the length of his body. So, staring one another out of countenance, we remained for perhaps the space of a minute. Then, stopping to look back once or twice, he slunk off among the bushes to the right of me, and I heard the swish of the fronds grow faint in the distance and die away. Long after he had disappeared, I remained sitting up staring in the direction of his retreat. My drowsy tranquillity had gone.

I was startled by a noise behind me, and turning suddenly saw the flapping white tail of a rabbit vanishing up the slope. I jumped to my feet. The apparition of this grotesque, half-bestial creature had suddenly populated the stillness of the afternoon for me. I looked around me rather nervously, and regretted that I was unarmed. Then I thought that the man I had just seen had been clothed in bluish cloth, had not been naked as a savage would have been; and I tried to persuade myself from that fact that he was after all probably a peaceful character, that the dull ferocity of his countenance belied him.

Yet I was greatly disturbed at the apparition. I walked to the left along the slope, turning my head about, and peering this way and that among the straight stems of the trees. Why should a man go on all-fours and drink with his lips? Presently I heard an animal wailing again, and taking it to be the puma, I turned about and walked in a direction diametrically opposite to the sound. This led me down to the stream, across which I stepped and pushed my way up through the undergrowth beyond.

I was startled by a great patch of vivid scarlet on the ground, and going up to it found it to be a peculiar fungus, branched and corrugated like a foliaceous lichen, but deliquescing into slime at the touch; and then in the shadow of some luxuriant ferns I came upon an unpleasant thing—the dead body of a rabbit covered with shining flies, but still warm and with the head torn off. I stopped aghast at the sight of the scattered blood. Here at least was one visitor to the island disposed of!

There were no traces of other violence about it. It looked as though it had been suddenly snatched up and killed; and as I stared at the little furry body came the difficulty of how the thing had been done. The vague dread that had been in my mind since I had seen the inhuman face of the man at the stream grew distincter as I stood there. I began to realize the hardihood of my expedition among these unknown people. The thicket about me became altered to my imagination. Every shadow became something more than a shadow—became an ambush; every rustle became a threat. Invisible things seemed watching me. I resolved to go back to the enclosure on the beach. I suddenly turned away and thrust myself violently, possibly even frantically, through the bushes, anxious to get a clear space about me again.

I stopped just in time to prevent myself emerging upon an open area. It was a kind of glade in the forest, made by a fall; seedlings were already starting up to struggle for the vacant space; and beyond, the

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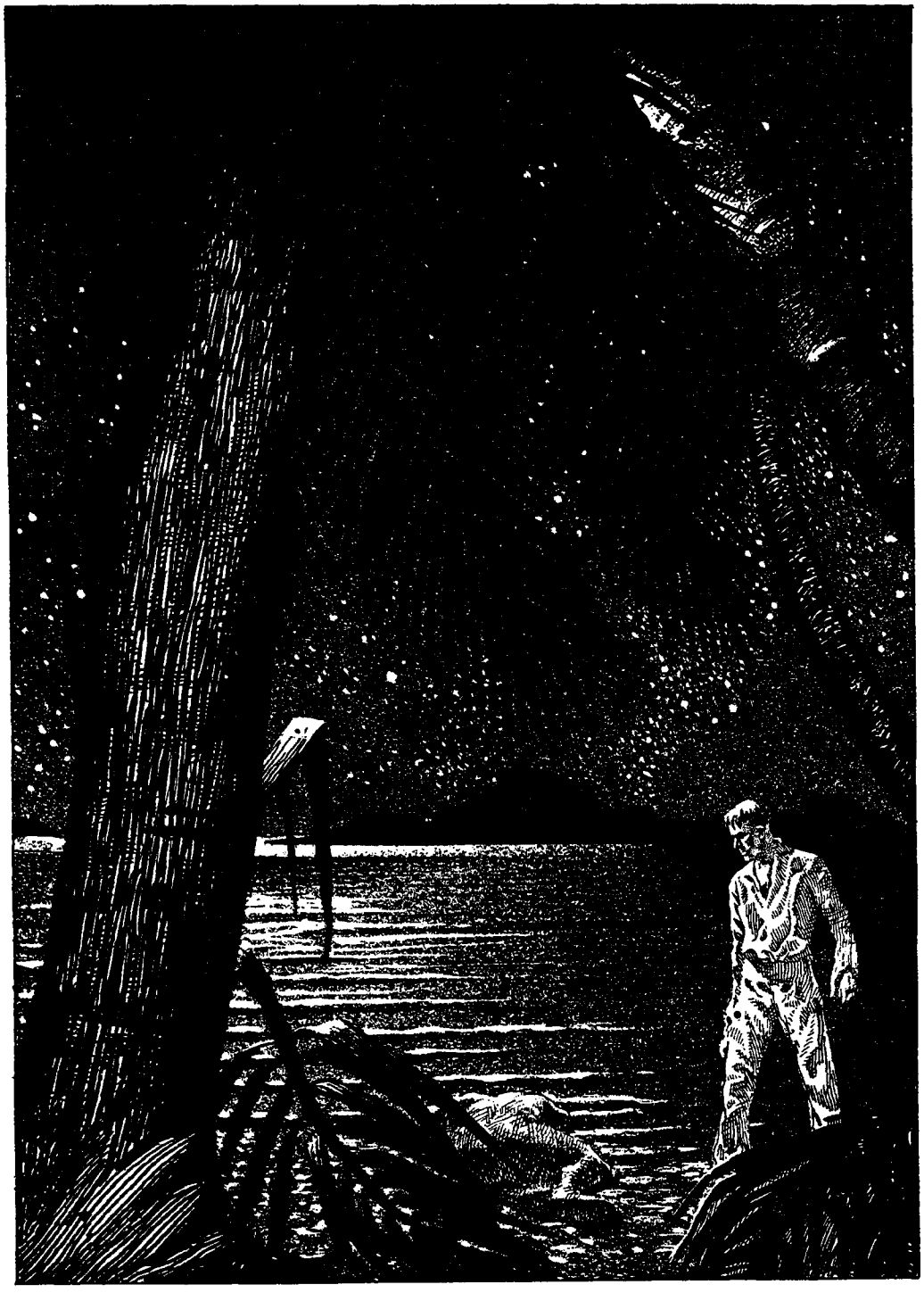

The animal-man fell headlong upon the sand, with its face in the water.

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dense growth of stems and twining vines and splashes of fungus and flowers closed in again. Before me, squatting together upon the fungoid ruins of a huge fallen tree and still unaware of my approach, were three grotesque human figures. One was evidently a female; the other two were men. They wore swathings of scarlet cloth; and their skins were of a dull pinkish-drab color, such as I had seen in no savages before. They had fat, heavy, chinless faces, retreating foreheads, and a scant bristly hair upon their heads. I never saw such bestial-looking creatures.

THEY were talking, or at least one of the men was talking to the other two, and all three had been too closely interested to heed the rustling of my approach. They swayed their heads and shoulders from side to side. The speaker's words came thick and sloppy, and though I could hear them distinctly I could not distinguish what he said. He seemed to me to be reciting some complicated gibberish. Presently his articulation became shriller, and spreading his hands he rose to his feet. At that the others began to gibber in unison, also rising to their feet, spreading their hands and swaying their bodies in rhythm with their chant. I noticed then the abnormal shortness of their legs, and their lank, clumsy feet.

All three began slowly to circle round, raising and stamping their feet and waving their arms; a kind of tune crept into their rhythmic recitation, and a refrain—"Aloola," or "Balloola," it sounded like. Their eyes began to sparkle, and their ugly faces to brighten, with an expression of strange pleasure. Saliva dripped from their lipless mouths.

Suddenly, as I watched their grotesque and unaccountable gestures, I perceived clearly for the first time what it was that had offended me, what had given me the two inconsistent and conflicting impressions of utter strangeness and yet of the strangest familiarity. The three creatures engaged in this mysterious rite were human in shape, and yet human beings with the strangest air about them of some familiar animal. Each of these creatures, despite its human form, its rag of clothing, and the rough humanity of its bodily form, had woven into it—into its movements, into the expression of its countenance, into its whole presence—some now irresistible suggestion of a hog, a swinish taint, the unmistakable mark of the beast.

I stood overcome by this amazing realization; and then the most horrible questionings came rushing into my mind. They began leaping in the air, first one and then the other, whooping and grunting. Then one slipped, and for a moment was on all-fours—to recover, indeed, forthwith. But that transitory gleam of the true animalism of these monsters was enough.

I turned as noiselessly as possible, and becoming every now and then rigid with the fear of being discovered, as a branch cracked or a leaf rustled, I pushed back into the bushes. It was long before I grew bolder, and dared to move freely. My only idea for the moment was to get away from these foul beings, and I scarcely noticed that I had emerged upon a faint pathway amidst the trees. Then suddenly traversing a little glade, I saw with an unpleasant start two clumsy legs among the trees, walking with noiseless footsteps parallel with my course, and perhaps thirty yards away from me.

The head and upper part of the body were hidden by a tangle of creeper. I stopped abruptly, hoping the creature did not see me. The feet stopped as I did. So nervous was I that I controlled an impulse to headlong flight with the utmost difficulty. Then looking hard, I distinguished through the interlacing network the head and body of the brute I had seen drinking. He moved his head. There was an emerald flash in his eyes as he glanced at me from the shadow of the trees, a half-luminous color that vanished as he turned his head again. He was motionless for a moment, and then with a noiseless tread began running through the green confusion. In another moment he had vanished behind some bushes. I could not see him, but I felt that he had stopped and was watching me again.

What on earth was he—man or beast? What did he want with me? I had no weapon, not even a stick. Flight would be madness. At any rate the Thing, whatever it was, lacked the courage to attack me. Setting my teeth hard, I walked straight towards him. I was anxious not to show the fear that seemed chilling my backbone. I pushed through a tangle of tall white-flowered bushes, and saw him twenty paces beyond, looking over his shoulder at me and hesitating. I advanced a step or two, looking steadfastly into his eyes.

"Who are you?" said I.

He tried to meet my gaze. *"No!* he said suddenly, and turning went bounding away from me through the undergrowth. Then he turned and stared at me again.

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His eyes shone brightly out of the dusk under the trees.

My heart was in my mouth; but I felt my only chance was bluff, and walked steadily towards him. He turned again, and vanished into the dusk. Once more I thought I caught the glint of his eyes, and that was all.

For the first time I realized how the lateness of the hour might affect me. The sun had set some minutes since, the swift dusk of the tropics was already fading out of the eastern sky, and a pioneer moth fluttered silently by my head. Unless I would spend the night among the unknown dangers of the mysterious forest, I must hasten back to the enclosure. The thought of a return to that pain-haunted refuge was extremely disagreeable, but still more so was the idea of being overtaken in the open by darkness and all that darkness might conceal. I gave one more look into the blue shadows that had swallowed up this odd creature, and then retraced my way down the slope towards the stream, going as I judged in the direction from which I had come.

I walked eagerly, my mind confused with many things, and presently found myself in a level place among scattered trees. The colorless clearness that comes after the sunset flush was darkling; the blue sky above grew momentarily deeper, and the little stars one by one pierced the attenuated light; the interspaces of the trees, the gaps in the further vegetation, that had been hazy blue in the daylight, grew black and mysterious. I pushed on. The color vanished from the world. The tree-tops rose against the luminous blue sky in inky silhouette, and all below that outline melted into one formless blackness.

Presently the trees grew thinner, and the shrubby undergrowth more abundant. Then there was a desolate space covered with a white sand, and then another expanse of tangled bushes. I did not remember crossing the sand-opening before. I began to be tormented by a faint rustling upon my right hand. I thought at first it was fancy, for whenever I stopped there was silence, save for the evening breeze in the tree-tops. Then when I turned to hurry on again there was an echo to my footsteps.

I TURNED away from the thickets, keeping to the more open ground, and endeavoring by sudden turns now and then

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to surprise something in the act of creeping upon me. I saw nothing, and nevertheless my sense of another presence grew steadily. I increased my pace, and after some time came to a slight ridge, crossed it, and turned sharply, regarding it steadfastly from the further side. It came out black and clear-cut against the darkling sky; and presently a shapeless lump heaved up momentarily against the skyline and vanished again. I felt assured now that my tawny-faced antagonist was stalking me once more; and coupled with that was another unpleasant realization, that I had lost my way.

For a time I hurried on hopelessly perplexed, and pursued by that stealthy approach. Whatever it was, the Thing either lacked the courage to attack me, or it was waiting to take me at some disadvantage. I kept studiously to the open. At times I would turn and listen; and presently I had half persuaded myself that my pursuer had abandoned the chase, or was a mere creation of my disordered imagination. Then I heard the sound of the sea. I quickened my footsteps almost into a run, and immediately there was a stumble in my rear.

I turned suddenly, and stared at the uncertain trees behind me. One black shadow seemed to leap into another. I listened, rigid, and heard nothing but the creep of the blood in my ears. I thought that my nerves were unstrung, and that my imagination was tricking me, and turned resolutely towards the sound of the sea again.

In a minute or so the trees grew thinner, and I emerged upon a bare, low headland running out into the somber water. The night was calm and clear, and the reflection of the growing multitude of the stars shivered in the tranquil heaving of the sea. Some way out, the wash upon an irregular band of reef shone with a pallid light of its own. Westward I saw the zodiacal light mingling with the yellow brilliance of the evening star. The coast fell away from me to the east, and westward it was hidden by the shoulder of the cape. Then I recalled the fact that Moreau's beach lay to the west.

A twig snapped behind me, and there was a rustle. I turned, and stood facing the dark trees. I could see nothing—or else I could see too much. Every dark form in the dimness had its ominous quality, its peculiar suggestion of alert watchfulness. So I stood for perhaps a minute, and then, with an eye to the trees still, turned westward; and as I moved, one among the shadows moved to follow me.

My heart beat quickly. Presently the broad sweep of a bay to the westward became visible, and I halted again. The noiseless shadow halted a dozen yards from me. A little point of light shone on the further bend of the curve, and the gray sweep of the sandy beach lay faint under the starlight. Perhaps two miles away was that little point of light. To get to the beach I should have to go through the trees where the shadows lurked, and down a bushy slope.

I could see the Thing rather more distinctly now. It was no animal, for it stood erect. At that I opened my mouth to speak, and found a hoarse phlegm choked my voice. I tried again, and shouted, "Who is there?" There was no answer. I advanced a step. The Thing did not move, only gathered itself together. My foot struck a stone. That gave me an idea. Without taking my eyes off the black form before me. I stooped and picked up this lump of rock; but at my motion the Thing turned abruptly as a dog might have done, and slunk obliquely into the further darkness.

Then I recalled a schoolboy expedient against big dogs, and twisted the rock into my handkerchief, and gave this a turn around my wrist. I heard a movement further off among the shadows, as if the Thing was in retreat. Then suddenly my tense excitement gave way; I broke into a profuse perspiration and fell trembling, with my adversary routed and this weapon in my hand.

It was some time before I could summon resolution to go down through the trees and bushes upon the flank of the headland to the beach. At last I did it at a run; and as I emerged from the thicket upon the sand, I heard some other body come crashing after me. At that I completely lost my head with fear, and began running along the sand. Forthwith there came the swift patter of soft feet in pursuit. I gave a wild cry, and redoubled my pace. Some dim, black things about three or four times the size of rabbits went running towards the bushes as I passed.

So long as I live, I shall remember the terror of that chase. I ran near the water's edge, and heard every now and then the splash of the feet that gained upon me. Far away, hopelessly far, was the yellow light. All the night about us was black and still. Splash, splash, came the pursuing feet, nearer and nearer. I felt my breath going, for I was quite out of training; it whooped as I drew it, and I felt a pain like a knife at my side.

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I perceived the Thing would come up with me long before I reached the enclosure, and, desperate and sobbing for my breath, I wheeled round upon it and struck at it as it came up to me—struck with all my strength. The stone came out of the sling of the handkerchief as I did so. As I turned, the Thing, which had been running on all-fours, rose to its feet, and the missile fell fair on its left temple. The skull rang loud, and the animal-man blundered into me, thrust me back with its hands, and went staggering past me to fall headlong upon the sand with its face in the water; and there it lay still.

I could not bring myself to approach that black heap. I left it there, with the water rippling round it, under the still stars, and giving it a wide berth pursued my way towards the yellow glow of the house; and presently, with a positive effect of relief, came the pitiful moaning of the puma, the sound that had originally driven me out to explore this mysterious island. As that, though I was faint and horribly fatigued, I gathered together all my strength, and began running again towards the light. I thought I heard a voice calling me.

CHAPTER III

THE SAYERS OF THE LAW

AS I DREW near the house I saw that the light shone from the open door of my room; and then I heard coming from out of the darkness at the side of that orange oblong of light, the voice of Montgomery shouting, "Prendick!" I continued runnng. Presently I heard him again. I replied by a feeble "Hullo!" and in another moment had staggered up to him.

"Where have you been?" said he, holding me at arm's length, so that the light from the door fell on my face. "We have both been so busy that we forgot you until about half an hour ago." He led me into the room and set me down in the deck-chair. For a while I was blinded by the light. "We did not think you would start to explore this island of ours without telling us," he said; and then, "I was afraid. . . . But—what. . . . Hullo!"

My last remaining strength slipped from me, and my head fell forward on my chest. I think he found a certain satisfaction in giving me brandy.

"For God's sake," said I, "fasten the door."

"You've beeen meting some of our curiosities, eh?" said he.

He locked the door and turned to me again. He asked me no questions, but gave me some more brandy and water and pressed me to eat. I was in a state of collapse. He said something vague about his forgetting to warn me, and asked me briefly when I left the house and what I had seen.

I answered him as briefly, in fragmentary sentences. "Tell me what it all means," said I, in a state bordering on hysterics.

"It's nothing so very dreadful," said he. "But I think you have had about enough for one day." The puma suddenly gave a sharp yell of pain. At that he swore under his breath. "I'm damned," said he, "if this place is not as bad as Gower Street, with its cats."

"Montgomery," said I, "what was that thing that came after me? Was it a beast or was it a man?"

"If you don't sleep tonight," he said, "you'll be off your head tomorrow."

I stood up in front of him. "What was that thing that came after me?" I asked.

He looked me squarely in the eyes, and twisted his mouth askew. His eyes, which had seemed animated a minute before, went dull.

"From your account," said he, "I'm thinking it was a bogle."

I felt a gust of intense irritation, which passed as quickly as it came. I flung myself into the chair again, and pressed my hands on my forehead. The puma began once more.

Montgomery came round behind me and put his hand on my shoulder. "Look here, Prendick," he said, "I had no business to let you drift out into this silly island of ours. But it's not so bad as you feel, man. Your nerves are worked to rags. Let me give you something that will make you sleep. *That*—will keep on for hours yet. You must simply get to sleep, or I won't answer for it."

I did not reply. I bowed forward, and covered my face with my hands. Presently he returned with a small measure containing a dark liquid. This he gave me. I took it unresistingly, and he helped me into the hammock.

When I awoke, it was broad day. For a little while I lay flat, staring at the roof above me. The rafters, I observed, were made out of the timbers of a ship. Then I turned my head, and saw a meal prepared for me on the table. I perceived that I was hungry, and prepared to clamber out of

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the hammock, which, very politely anticipating my intention, twisted round and deposited me upon all-fours on the floor.

I got up and sat down before the food. I had a heavy feeling in my head, and only the vaguest memory at first of the things that had happened over night. The morning breeze blew very pleasantly through the unglazed window, and that and the food contributed to the sense of animal comfort which I experienced. Presently the door behind me—the door inward towards the yard of the enclosure—opened. I turned and saw Montgomery's face.

"All right," said he. "I'm frightfully busy." And he shut the door.

Afterwards I discovered that he forgot to relock it. Then I recalled the expression of his face the previous night, and with that the memory of all I had experienced reconstructed itself before me. Even as that fear came back to me came a cry from within; but this time it was not the cry of a puma. I put down the mouthful that hesitated upon my lips, and listened. Silence, save for the whisper of the morning breeze. I began to think my ears had deceived me.

After a long pause I resumed my meal, but with my ears still vigilant. Presently I heard something else, very faint and low. I sat as if frozen in my attitude. Though it was faint and low, it moved me more profoundly than all that I had hitherto heard of the abominations behind the wall. There was no mistake this time in the quality of the dim, broken sounds; no doubt at all of their source. For it was groaning, broken sobs and gasps of anguish. It was no brute this time; it was a human being in torment!

As I realized this I rose, and in three steps had crossed the room, seized the handle of the door into the yard, and flung it open before me.

"Prendick, man! Stop!" cried Montgomery, intervening.

A startled deerhound yelped and snarled. There was blood, I saw, in the sink—brown, and some scarlet—and I smelt the peculiar smell of carbolic acid. Then through an open doorway beyond, in the dim light of the shadow, I saw something bound painfully upon a framework, scarred, red, and bandaged; and then blotting this out appeared the face of old Moreau, white and terrible. In a moment he had gripped me by the shoulder with a hand that was smeared red, had twisted me off my feet, and flung me headlong back into my own room. He lifted me as though I was a little child. I fell at full length upon the floor, and the door slammed and shut out the passionate intensity of his face. Then I heard the key turn in the lock, and Montgomery's voice in expostulation.

"Ruin the work of a lifetime," I heard Moreau say.

"He does not understand," said Montgomery, and other things that were inaudible.

"I can't spare the time yet," said Moreau.

The rest I did not hear. I picked myself up and stood trembling, my mind a chaos of the most horrible misgivings. Could it be possible, I thought, that such a thing as the vivisection of men was carried on here? The question shot like lightning across a tumultous sky; and suddenly the clouded horror of my mind condensed into a vivid realization of my own danger.

IT CAME before my mind with an unreasonable hope of escape that the outer door of my room was still open to me. I was convinced now, absolutely assured, that Moreau had been vivisecting a human being. All the time since I had heard his name, I had been trying to link in my mind in some way the grotesque animalism of the islanders with his abominations; and now I thought I saw it all. The memory of his work on the transfusion of blood recurred to me. These creatures I had seen were the victims of some hideous experiment. These sickening scoundrels had merely intended to keep me back, to fool me with their display of confidence, and presently to fall upon me with a fate more horrible than death—with torture; and after torture the most hideous degradation it was possible to conceive—to send me off a lost soul, a beast, to the rest of their Comus rout.

I looked around for some weapon. Nothing. Then with an inspiration I turned over the deck-chair, put my foot on the side of it, and tore away the side rail. It happened that a nail came away with the wood, and projecting, gave a touch of danger to an otherwise petty weapon. I heard a step outside, and incontinently flung open the door and found Montgomery within a yard of it. He meant to lock the outer door! I raised this nailed stick of mine and cut at his face; but he sprang back. I hesitated a moment, then turned and fled round the corner of the house. "Prendick, man!" I heard his astonished cry. "Don't be a silly ass, man!"

Another minute, thought I, and he would

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have had me locked in, and as ready as a hospital rabbit for my fate. He emerged behind the corner, for I heard him shout, "Prendick!" Then he began to run after me, shouting things as he ran. This time running blindly, I went northeastward in a direction at right angles to my previous expedition. Once, as I went running headlong up the beach, I glanced over my shoulder and saw his attendant with him. I ran furiously up the slope, over it, then turning eastward along a rocky valley fringed on either side with jungle I ran for perhaps a mile altogether, my chest straining, my heart beating in my ears; and then hearing nothing of Montgomery or his man, and feeling upon the verge of exhaustion, I doubled sharply back towards the beach as I judged, and lay down in the shelter of a canebreak.

There I remained for a long time, too fearful to move, and indeed too fearful even to plan a course of action. The wild scene about me lay sleeping silently under the sun, and the only sound near me was the thin hum of some small gnats that had discovered me. Presently I became aware of a drowsy breathing sound, the soughing of the sea upon the beach.

After about an hour I heard Montgomery shouting my name, far away to the north. That set me thinking of my plan of action. As I interpreted it then, this island was inhabited only by these two vivisectors and their animalized victims. Some of these no doubt they could press into their service against me if need arose. I knew both Moreau and Montgomery carried revolvers; and, save for a feeble bar of deal spiked with a small nail, the merest mockery of a mace, I was unarmed.

So I lay still there, until I began to think of food and drink; and at that thought the real hopelessness of my position came home to me. I knew no way of getting anything to eat. I was too ignorant of botany to discover any resort of root or fruit that might lie about me; I had no means of trapping the few rabbits upon the island. It grew blanker the more I turned the prospect over. At last in the desperation of my position, my mind turned to the animal men I had encountered. I tried to find some hope in what I remembered of them. In turn I recalled each one I had seen, and tried to draw some augury of assistance from my memory.

Then suddenly I heard a staghound bay, and at that realized a new danger. I took little time to think, or they would have caught me then, but snatching up my nailed stick, rushed headlong from my hiding-place towards the sound of the sea. I remember a growth of thorny plants, with spines that stabbed like pen-knives. I emerged bleeding and with torn clothes upon the lip of a long creek opening northward. I went straight into the water without a minute's hesitation, wading up the creek, and presently finding myself knee-deep in a little stream. I scrambled out at last on the westward bank, and with my heart beating loudly in my ears, crept into a tangle of ferns to await the issue. I heard the dog (there was only one) draw nearer, and yelp when it came to the thorns. Then I heard no more, and presently began to think I had escaped.

THE minutes passed; the silence lengthened out, and at last after an hour of security my courage began to return to me. By this time I was no longer very much terrified or very miserable. I had, as it were, passed the limit of terror and despair. I felt now that my life was practically lost, and that persuasion made me capable of daring anything. I had even a certain wish to encounter Moreau face to face; and as I had waded into the water, I remembered that if I were too hard pressed at least one path of escape still lay open to me—they could not very well prevent my drowning myself.

I had half a mind to drown myself then; but an odd wish to see the whole adventure out, a queer, impersonal, spectacular interest in myself, restrained me. I stretched my limbs, sore and painful from the pricks of the spiny plants, and stared around me at the trees; and, so suddenly that it seemed to jump out of the green tracery about it, my eyes lit upon a black face watching me. I saw that it was the simian creature who had met the launch upon the beach. He was clinging to the oblique stem of a palm-tree. I gripped my stick, and stood facing him. He began chattering. "You, you, you" was all I could distinguish at first. Suddenly he dropped from the tree, and in another moment was holding the fronds apart and staring curiously at me.

I did not feel the same repugnance towards this creature which I had experienced in my encounters with the other Beast Men. "You," he said, "in the boat." He was a man, then—at least as much of a man as Montgomery's attendant—for he could talk.

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"Yes," I said, "I came in the boat. From the ship."

"Oh!" he said, and his bright, restless eyes traveled over me, to my hands, to the stick I carried, to my feet, to the tattered places in my coat, and the cuts and scratches I had received from the thorns. He seemed puzzled at something. His eyes came back to my hands. He held his own hand out and counted his digits slowly, "One, two, three, four, five—eight?"

I did not grasp his meaning then; afterwards I was to find that a great proportion of these Beast People had malformed hands, lacking sometimes even three digits. But guessing this was in some way a greeting, I did the same thing by way of reply. He grinned with immense satisfaction. Then his swift roving glance went round again; he made a swift movement—and vanished.

The fern fronds he had stood between came swishing together.

I pushed out of the brake after him, and was astonished to find him swinging cheerfully by one lank arm from a rope of creeper that looped down from the foliage overhead. His back was to me.

"Hullo!" said I.

He came down with a twisting jump, and stood facing me.

"I say," said I, "where can I get something to eat?"

"Eat!" he said. "Eat Man's food, now." And his eye went back to the swing of ropes. "At the huts."

"But where are the huts?"

"Oh!"

"I'm new, you know."

At that he swung round, and set off at a quick walk. All his motions were curiously rapid. "Come along," said he.

I went with him to see the adventure out. I guessed the huts were some rough shelter where he and some more of these Beast People lived. I might perhaps find them friendly, find some handle in their minds to take hold of. I did not know how far they had forgotten their human heritage.

My ape-like companion trotted along by my side, with his hands hanging down and his jaw thrust forward. I wondered what memory he might have in him. "How long have you been on this island?" said I.

"How long?" he asked; and after having the question repeated, he held up three fingers.

The creature was little better than an idiot. I tried to make out what he meant by that, and it seems I bored him. After another question or two he suddenly left my side and went leaping at some fruit that hung from a tree. He pulled down a handful of prickly husks and went on eating the contents. I noted this with satisfaction, for here at least was a hint for feeding. I tried him with some other questions, but his chattering, prompt responses were as often as not quite at cross purposes with my question. Some few were appropriate, others quite parrot-like.

I was so intent upon these peculiarities that I scarcely noticed the path we followed. Presently we came to trees, all charred and brown, and so to a bare place covered with a yellow-white incrustation, across which a drifting smoke, pungent in whiffs to nose and eyes, went drifting. On our right, over a shoulder of bare rock, I saw the level blue of the sea. The path coiled down abruptly into a narrow ravine between two tumbled and knotty masses of blackish scoriae. Into this we plunged.

It was extremely dark, this passage, after the blinding sunlight reflected from the sulphurous ground. Its walls grew steep, and approached each other. Blotches of green and crimson drifted across my eyes. My conductor stopped suddenly. "Home!" said he, and I stood in a floor of a chasm that was at first absolutely dark to me. I heard some strange noises, and thrust the knuckles of my left hand into my eyes. I became aware of a disagreeable odor, like that of a monkey's cage ill-cleaned. Beyond, the rock opened again upon a gradual slope of sunlit greenery, and on either hand the light smote down through narrow ways into the central gloom.

THEN something cold touched my hand. I started violently, and saw close to me a dim pinkish thing, looking more like a flayed child than anything else in the world. The creature had exactly the mild but repulsive features of a sloth, the same low forehead and slow gestures.

As the first shock of the change of light passed, I saw about me more distinctly. The little sloth-like creature was standing and staring at me. My conductor had vanished. The place was a narrow passage between high walls of lava, a crack in the knotted rock, and on either side interwoven heaps of sea-mat, palm-fans, and reeds leaning against the rock formed rough and impenetrably dark dens. The winding way up the ravine between these was scarcely three yards wide, and was

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disfigured by lumps of decaying fruit-pulp and other refuse, which accounted for the disagreeable stench of the place.

The little pink sloth-like creature was still blinking at me when my Ape-man reappeared at the aperture of the nearest of these dens, and beckoned me in. As he did so, slouching monster wriggled out of one of the places, further up this strange street, and stood up in featureless silhouette against the bright green beyond, staring at me. I hesitated, having half a mind to bolt the way I had come; and then, determined to go through with the adventure, I gripped my nailed stick about the middle and crawled into the little evil-smelling lean-to after my conductor.

It was a semi-circular space, shaped like the half of a bee-hive; and against the rocky wall that formed the inner side of it was a pile of variegated fruits, cocoa-nuts among others. Some rough vessels of lava and wood stood about the floor, and one on a rough stool. There was no fire. In the darkest corner of the hut sat a shapeless mass of darkness that grunted "Hey!" as I came in, and my Ape-man stood in the dim light of the doorway and held out a split cocoa-nut to me as I crawled into the other corner and squatted down. I took it, and began gnawing it, as serenely as possible, in spite of a certain trepidation and the nearly intolerable closeness of the den. The little pink sloth-like creature stood in the aperture of the hut, and something else with a drab face and bright eyes came staring over its shoulder.

"Hey!" came out of the lump of mystery opposite. "It is a man."

"It is a man," gabbled my conductor—"a man, a man, a five-man, like me."

"Shut up!" said the voice from the dark, and grunted. I gnawed my cocoa-nut amid an impressive stillness.

I peered hard into the blackness, but could distinguish nothing.

"It is a man," the voice repeated. "He comes to live with us?"

It was a thick voice, with something in it—a kind of whistling overtone—that struck me as peculiar; but the English accent was strangely good.

The Ape-man looked at me as though he expected something. I perceived the pause was interrogative. "He comes to live with you," I said.

"It is a man. He must learn the Law."

I began to distinguish now a deeper blackness in the black, a vague outline of a hunched-up figure. Then I noticed the opening of the place was darkened by two more black heads. My hand tightened on my stick.

The thing in the dark repeated in a louder tone, "Say the words." I had missed its last remark. "Not to go on all-fours; that is the Law," it repeated in a kind of sing-song.

I was puzzled.

"Say the words," said the Ape-man, repeating, and the figures in the doorway echoed this, with a threat in the tone of their voices.

I realized that I had to repeat this idiotic formula; and then began the insanest ceremony. The voice in the dark began to intone a mad litany, line by line, and I and the rest to repeat it. As they did so, they swayed from side to side in the oddest way, and beat their hands upon their knees; and I followed their example. I could have imagined I was already dead and in another world. That dark hut, these grotesque dim figures, just flecked here and there by a glimmer of light, and all of them swaying and chanting.

"Not to go on all-fours; that
is the Law.
Are we not Men?
"Not to suck up Drink; that
is the Law.
Are we not Men?
"Not to eat Fish or Flesh; that
is the Law.
Are we not Men?
"Not to claw the Bark of Trees;
that is the Law.
Are we not Men?
"Not to chase other Men; *that*
is the Law.
Are we not Men?"

And so from the prohibition of these acts of folly, on to the prohibition of what I thought then were the maddest, most impossible, and most indecent things one could well imagine. A kind of rhythmic fervor fell on all of us; we gabbled and swayed faster and faster, repeating this amazing Law. Superficially the contagion of these brutes was upon me, but deep down within me the laughter and disgust struggled together. We ran through a long list of prohibitions, and then the chant swung round to a new formula.

"*His* is the House of Pain.
"*His* is the Hand that makes.
"*His* is the Hand that wounds.
"*His* is the Hand that heals."

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And so on for another long series, mostly quite incomprehensible gibberish to me about *Him,* whoever he might be. I could have fancied it was a dream, but never before have I heard nightmare chanting in a dream.

"*His* is the lightning flash," we sang. "*His* is the deep, salt sea."

A horrible fancy came into my head that Moreau, after animalizing these men, had infected their dwarfed brains with a kind of deification of himself. However, I was too keenly aware of white teeth and strong claws about me to stop my chanting on that account.

"*His* are the stars in the sky."

AT LAST that song ended. I saw the Ape-man's face shining with perspiration; and my eyes being now accustomed to the darkness, I saw more distinctly the figure in the corner from which the voice came. It was the size of a man, but it seemed covered with a dull gray hair almost like a Skye-terrier. What was it? What were they all? Imagine yourself surrounded by all the most horrible cripples and maniacs it is possible to conceive, and you may understand a little of my feelings with these grotesque caricatures of humanity about me.

"He is a five-man, a five-man, a five-man—like me," said the Ape-man.

I held out my hands. The gray creature in the corner leaned forward.

"Not to run on all-fours; that is the Law. Are we not Men?" he said.

He put out a strangely distorted talon and gripped my fingers. The thing was almost like the hoof of a deer produced into claws. I could have yelled with surprise and pain. His face came forward and peered at my nails, came forward into the light of the opening of the hut; and I saw with a quivering disgust that it was like the face of neither man nor beast, but a mere shock of gray hair, with three shadowy over-archings to make the eyes and mouth.

"He has little nails," said the grisly deformed creature in his hairy beard. "It is well."

"Eat roots and herbs; it is His Will," said the Ape-man.

"I am the Sayer of the Law," said the gray figure. "Here come all that be new to learn the Law. I sit in the darkness and say the Law."

"It is even so," said one of the beasts in the doorway.

"Evil are the punishments of those who break the Law. None escape."

"None escape," said the Beast Folk, glancing furtively at one another.

"None, none," said the Ape-man—"none escape. See! I did a little thing, a wrong thing, once. I jabbered, jabbered, stopped talking. None could understand. I am burnt, branded in the hand. He is great. He is good!"

"None escape," said the gray creature in the corner.

"None escape," said the Beast People, looking askance at one another.

"For every one the want that is bad," said the gray Sayer of the Law. "What you will want we do not know; we shall know. Some want to follow things that move, to watch and slink and wait and spring; to kill and bite, bite deep and rich, sucking the blood. It is bad. 'Not to chase other Men; that is the Law. *Are we* not Men?'"

"None escape," said a dappled brute standing in the doorway.

"For every one the want is bad," said the gray Sayer of the Law. "Some want to go tearing with teeth and hands into the roots of things, snuffing into the earth. It is bad."

"None escape," said the men in the door.

"Some go clawing trees; some go scratching at the graves of the dead; some go fighting with foreheads or feet or claws; some bite suddenly, none giving occasion; some love uncleanness."

"None escape," said the Ape-man, scratching his calf.

"None escape," said the little pink sloth-creature.

"Punishment is sharp and sure. Therefore learn the Law. Say the words."

And incontinently he began again the strange litany of the Law, and again I and all these creatures began singing and swaying. My head reeled with this jabbering and the close stench of the place; but I kept on, trusting to find presently some chance of a new development.

"Not to go on all-fours; that is the Law. *Are we not Men?*"

We were making such a noise that I noticed nothing of a tumult outside, until some one, who I think was one of the two Swine Men I had seen, thrust his head over the little pink sloth-creature and shouted something excitedly, something that I did not catch. Incontinently those at the opening of the hut vanished; my Ape-man rushed out; the thing that had sat in the dark followed him (I only observed that it was big and clumsy, and covered with

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silvery hair) and I was left alone. Then before I reached the aperture I heard the yelp of a staghound.

In another moment I was standing outside the hovel, my chair-rail in my hand, every muscle of me quivering. Before me were the clumsy backs of perhaps a score of these Beast People, their misshapen heads half hidden by their shoulder-blades. They were gesticulating excitedly. Other half-animal faces glared interrogation out of the hovels. Looking in the direction in which they faced, I saw coming through the haze under the trees beyond the end of the passage of dens the dark figure and awful white face of Morea. He was holding the leaping staghound back, and close behind him came Montgomery, revolver in hand.

For a moment I stood horror-struck. I turned and saw the passage behind me blocked by another heavy brute, with a huge gray face and twinkling little eyes, advancing towards me. I looked round and saw to the right of me and a half-dozen yards in front of me a narrow gap in the wall of rock through which a ray of light slanted into the shadows.

"Stop!" cried Moreau as I strode towards this, and then, "Hold him!"

AT THAT, first one face turned towards me and then others. Their bestial minds were happily slow. I dashed my shoulder into a clumsy monster who was turning to see what Moreau meant, and flung him forward into another. I felt his hands fly round, clutching at me and missing me. The little pink sloth-creature dashed at me, and I gashed down its ugly face with the nail in my stick, and in another minute was scrambling up a steep side pathway, a kind of sloping chimney, out of the ravine. I heard a howl behind me, and cries of "Catch him!" "Hold him!" and the gray-faced creature appeared behind me and jammed his huge bulk into the cleft. "Go on! go on!" they howled. I clambered up the narrow cleft in the rock and came out upon the sulphur on the westward side of the village of the Beast Men.

That gap was altogether fortunate for me, for the narrow chimney, slanting obliquely upward, must have impeded the nearer pursuers. I ran over the white space and down a steep slope, through a scattered growth of trees, and came to a low-lying stretch of tall reeds, through which I pushed into a dark, thick undergrowth that was black and succulent under foot. As I plunged into the reeds, my foremost pursuers emerged from the gap. I broke my way through this undergrowth for some minutes. The air behind me and about me was soon full of threatening cries. I heard the tumult of my pursuers in the gap up the slope, then the crashing of the reeds, and every now and then the crackling crash of a branch. Some of the creatures roared like excited beasts of prey. The staghound yelped to the left. I heard Moreau and Montgomery shouting in the same direction. I turned sharply to the right. It seemed to me even then that I heard Montgomery shouting for me to run for my life.

Presently the ground gave rich and oozy under my feet; but I was desperate and went headlong into it, struggled through knee-deep, and so came to a winding path among tall canes. The noise of my pursuers passed away to my left. In one place three strange, pink, hopping animals, about the size of cats, bolted before my footsteps. This pathway ran up hill, across another open space covered with white incrustation, and plunged into a canebrake

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again. Then suddenly it turned parallel with the edge of a steep-walled gap, which came without warning, like the ha-ha of an English park—turned with an unexpected abruptness. I was still running with all my might, and I never saw this drop until I was flying headlong through the air.

I fell on my forearms and head, among thorns, and rose with a torn ear and bleeding face. I had fallen into a precipitous ravine, rocky and thorny, full of a hazy mist which drifted about me in wisps, and with a narrow streamlet from which this mist came meandering down the center. I was astonished at this thin fog in the full blaze of daylight; but I had no time to stand wondering then. I turned to my right, down-stream, hoping to come to the sea in that direction, and so have my way open to drown myself. It was only later that I found that I had dropped my nailed stick in my fall.

Presently the ravine grew narrower for a space, and carelessly I stepped into the stream. I jumped out again pretty quickly, for the water was almost boiling. I noticed too there was a thin sulphurous scum drifting upon its coiling water. Almost immediate came a turn in the ravine, and the indistinct blue horizon. The nearer sea was flashing the sun from a myriad facets. I saw my death before me; but I was hot and panting, with the warm blood oozing out on my face and running pleasantly through my veins. I felt more than a touch of exultation too, at having distanced my pursuers. It was not in me then to go out and drown myself yet. I stared back the way I had come.

I listened. Save for the hum of the gnats and the chirp of some insects that hopped among the thorns, the air was absolutely still. Then came the yelp of a dog, very faint, and a chattering and gibbering, the snap of a whip, and voices. They grew louder, then fainter again. The noise receded up the stream and faded away. For a while the chase was over; but I knew now how much hope of help for me lay in the Beast People.

I TURNED again and went on down towards the sea. I found the hot stream broadened out to a shallow, weedy sand, in which an abundance of crabs and long-bodied, many-legged creatures started from my footfall. I walked to the very edge of the salt water, and then I felt I was safe. I turned and stared, arms akimbo, at the thick green behind me, into which the steamy ravine cut like a smoking gash. But, as I say, I was too full of excitement and (a true saying, though those who have never known danger may doubt it) too desperate to die.

Then it came into my head that there was one chance before me yet. While Moreau and Montgomery and their bestial rabble chased me through the island, might I not go round the beach until I came to their enclosure—make a flank march upon them, in fact, and then with a rock lugged out of their loosely bulit wall, perhaps, smash in the lock of the smaller door and see what I could find (knife, pistol, or what not) to fight them with when they returned? It was at any rate something to try.

So I turned to the westward and walked along by the water's edge.

Then suddenly, far in front of me, I saw first one and then several figures emerging from the bushes—Moreau, with his gray staghound, then Montgomery, and two others.

They saw me, and began gesticulating and advancing. I stood watching them approach. The two Beast Men came running forward to cut me off from the undergrowth, inland. Montgomery came, running also, but straight toward me. Moreau followed slower with the dog.

At last I roused myself from my inaction, and turning seaward walked straight into the water. The water was very shallow at first. I was thirty yards out before the waves reached to my waist.

"What are you doing, man?" cried Montgomery.

"I am going to drown myself," said I.

Montgomery and Moreau looked at each other. "Why?" asked Moreau.

"Because that is better than being tortured by you."

"I told you so," said Montgomery, and Moreau said something in a low tone.

"What makes you think I shall torture you?" asked Moreau.

"What I saw," I said. "And those—yonder."

"Hush!" said Moreau, and held up his hand.

"I will not," said I. "They were men: what are they now? I at least will not be like them."

I looked past my interlocutors. Up the beach were M'long, Montgomery's attendant, and one of the white-swathed brutes from the boat. Farther up, in the shadow of the trees, I saw my little Ape-man, and behind him some other dim figures.

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"What are these creatures?" said I, pointing to them and raising my voice more and more that it might reach them. "They were men, men like yourselves, whom you have infected with some bestial taint—men whom you have enslaved, and whom you still fear. You who listen," I cried, pointing now to Moreau and shouting past him to the Beast Men. "You who listen! Do you not see these men still fear you, go in dread of you? Why, then, do you fear them? You are many—"

"For God's sake," cried Montgomery, "stop that, Prendick!"

"Prendick!" cried Moreau.

They both shouted together, as if to drown my voice; and behind them lowered the staring faces of the Beast Men, wondering, their deformed hands hanging down, their shoulders hunched up. They seemed, as I fancied, to be trying to understand me, to remember, I thought, something of their human past.

I went on shouting, I scarcely remember what—that Moreau and Montgomery could be killed, that they were not to be feared: that was the burden of what I put into the heads of the Beast People. I saw the green-eyed man in the dark rags, who had met me on the evening of my arrival, come out from among the trees, and others followed him, to hear me better. At last for want of breath I paused.

"Listen to me for a moment," said the steady voice of Moreau; "and then say what you will."

"Well?" said I.

He coughed, thought, then shouted. "Latin, Prendick! Bad Latin, schoolboy Latin; but try and understand. *Hi non sunt homines; sunt animalis* who *nos habemus*—vivisected. A humanizing process. I will explain. Come ashore."

I LAUGHED. "A pretty story," said I "They talk, build houses. They were men. It's likely I'll come ashore."

"The water just beyond where you stand is deep—and full of sharks."

"That's my way," said I. "Short and sharp. Presently."

"Wait a minute." He took something out of his pocket that flashed back the sun, and dropped the object at his feet. "That's a loaded revolver," said he. "Montgomery here will do the same. Now we are going up the beach until you are satisfied the distance is safe. Then come and take the revolvers."

"Not I! You have a third between you."

"I want you to think over things, Prendick. In the first place, I never asked you to come upon this island. If we vivisected men, we should import men, not beasts. In the next, we had you drugged last night, had we wanted to work you any mischief; and in the next, now your first panic is over and you can think a little, is Montgomery here quite up to the character you give him? We have chased you for your good. Because this island is full of—inimical phenomena. Besides, why should we want to shoot you when you have just offered to drown yourself?"

"Why did you set—your people onto me when I was in the hut?"

"We felt sure of catching you, and bringing you out of danger. Afterwards we drew away from the scent, for your good."

I mused. It seemed just possible. Then I remembered something again. "But I saw," said I, "in the enclosure—"

"That was the puma."

"Look here, Prendick," said Montgomery, "you're a silly ass! Come out of the water and take these revolvers, and talk. We can't do anything more than we could do now."

I will confess that then, and indeed always, I distrusted and dreaded Moreau; but Montgomery was a man I felt I understood.

"Go up the beach," said I, after thinking, and added, "holding your hands up."

"Can't do that," said Montgomery, with an explanatory nod over his shoulder. "Undignified."

"Go up to the trees, then," said I, "as you please."

"It's a damned silly ceremony," said Montgomery.

Both turned and faced the six or seven grotesque creatures, who stood there in the sunlight, solid, casting shadows, moving, and yet so incredibly unreal. Montgomery cracked his whip at them, and forthwith they all turned and fled helter-skelter into the trees; and when Montgomery and Moreau were at a distance I judged sufficient, I waded ashore, and picked up and examined the revolvers. To satisfy myself against the subtlest trickery, I discharged one at a round lump of lava, and had the satisfaction of seeing the stone pulverized and the beach splashed with lead. Still I hesitated for a moment.

"I'll take the risk," said I, at last; and with a revolver in each hand I walked up the beach towards them.

"That's better," said Moreau, without affectation. "As it is, you have wasted the best part of my day with your confounded

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imagination." And with a touch of contempt which humiliated me, he and Montgomery turned and went on in silence before me.

The knot of Beast Men, still wondering, stood back among the trees. I passed them as serenely as possible. One started to follow me, but retreated again when Montgomery cracked his whip. The rest stood silent—watching. They may once have been animals; but I never before saw an animal trying to think.

CHAPTER IV

DOCTOR MOREAU EXPLAINS

"AND now, Prendick, I will explain," said Doctor Moreau, as soon as we had eaten and drunk. "I must confess that you are the most dictatorial guest I ever entertained. I warn you that this is the last I shall do to oblige you. The next thing you threaten to commit suicide about, I shan't do—even at some personal inconvenience."

He sat in my deck-chair, a cigar half consumed in his white, dexterous-looking fingers. The light of the swinging lamp fell on his white hair; he stared through the little window out at the starlight. I sat as far away from him as possible, the table between us and the revolvers to hand. Montgomery was not present. I did not care to be with the two of them in such a little room.

"You admit that the vivisected human being, as you called it, is, after all, only the puma?" said Moreau. He had made me visit that horror in the inner room, to assure myself of its inhumanity.

"It is the puma," I said, "still alive, but so cut and mutilated as I pray I may never see living flesh again. Of all vile . . . ."

"Never mind that," said Moreau; "at least, spare me those youthful horrors. Montgomery used to be just the same. You admit that it is the puma. Now be quiet, while I reel off my physiological lecture to you."

And forthwith, beginning in the tone of a man supremely bored, but presently warming a little, he explained his work to me. He was very convincing. Now and then there was a touch of sarcasm in his voice. Presently I found myself hot with shame at our mutual positions.

The creatures I had seen were not men, had never been men. They were animals, humanized animals—triumphs of vivisection.

"You forget all that a skilled vivisector can do with living things," said Moreau. "For my own part, I'm puzzled why the things I have done here have not been done before. Small efforts, of course, have been made—amputation, tongue-cutting, excisions. Of course you know a squint may be induced or cured by surgery? Then in the case of excisions you have all kinds of secondary changes, pigmentary disturbances, modifications of the passions, alterations in the secretion of fatty tissue. I have no doubt you have heard of these things?"

"Of course," said I. "But these foul creatures of yours . . . ."

"All in good time," said he, waving his hand at me; "I am only beginning. Those are trivial cases of alteration. Surgery can do better things than that. There is building up as well as breaking down and changing. You have heard, perhaps, of a common surgical operation resorted to in cases where the nose has been destroyed; a flap of skin is cut from the forehead, turned down on the nose, and heals in the new position. This is a kind of grafting in a new position of part of an animal upon itself. Grafting of freshly obtained material from another animal is also possible—the case of teeth, for example—a very common surgical job.

"The grafting of skin and bone is done to facilitate healing: the surgeon places in the middle of the wound pieces of skin snipped from another animal, or fragments of bone from a victim freshly killed. Hunter's cockspur—possibily you have heard of that—flourished on the bull's neck; and the rhinoceros rats of the Algerian zouaves are also to be thought of—monsters manufactured by transfering a slip from the tail of an ordinary rat to its snout, and allowing it to heal in that position."

"Monsters manufactured!" said I. "Then you mean to tell me—"

"Yes. These creatures you have seen are animals carven and wrought into new shapes. To that, to the study of the plasticity of living forms, my life has been devoted. I have studied for years, gaining in knowledge as I go. I see you look horrified, and yet I am telling you nothing new. It all lay in the surface of practical anatomy years ago, but no one had the temerity to touch it. It's not simply the outward form of an animal which I can change. The physiology, the chemical rhythm of the creature, may also be made to undergo an enduring modification—of which vac-

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It was a limbless thing with a horrible face, that writhed along the ground in serpentine fashion.

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cination and other methods of inoculation with living or dead matter are examples that will, no doubt, be familiar to you. A similar operation is the transfusion of blood—with which subject, indeed, I began.

"These are all familiar cases. Less so, and probably far more extensive, were the operations of those mediaeval practitioners who made dwarfs and beggar-cripples, show-monsters,—some vestiges of whose art still remain in the preliminary manipulation of the young montebank or contortionist. Victor Hugo gives an account of them in *'L'Homme qui Rit.'*—

"But perhaps my meaning grows plain now. You begin to see that it is a possible thing to transplant tissue from one part of an animal to another, or from one animal to another; to alter its chemical reactions and methods of growth; to modify the articulations of its limbs; and, indeed, to change it in its most intimate structure.

"And yet this extraordinary branch of knowledge has never been sought as an end, and systematically, by modern investigators until I took it up! Some of such things have been hit upon in the last resort of surgery; most of the kindred evidence that will recur to your mind has been demonstrated as it were by accident—by tyrants, by criminals, by the breeders of horses and dogs, by all kinds of untrained clumsy-handed men working for their own immediate ends. I was the first man to take up this question armed with antiseptic surgery, and with a really scientific knowledge of the laws of growth. Yet one would imagine it must have been practised in secret before. Such creatures as the Siamese Twins—and in the vaults of the Inquisition. No doubt their chief aim was artistic torture, but some at least of the inquisitors must have had a touch of scientific curiosity."

"But," said I, "these things—these animals talk!"

He said that was so, and proceeded to point out that the possibility of vivisection does not stop at a mere physical metamorphosis. A pig may be educated. The mental structure is even less determinate than the bodily. In our growing science of hypnotism we find the promise of a possibility of superseding old inherent instincts by new suggestions, grafting upon or replacing the inherited fixed ideas.

Very much indeed of what we call moral education, he said, is such an artificial modification and perversion of instinct; pugnacity is trained into courageous self-sacrifice, and suppressed criminality into religious emotion. And the great difference between man and monkey is in the larynx, he continued—in the incapacity to frame delicately different sound-symbols by which thought could be sustained. In this I failed to agree with him, but with a certain incivility he declined to notice my objection. He repeated that the thing was so, and continued his account of his work.

I ASKED him why he had taken the human form as a model. There seemed to me then, and there still seems to me now, a strange wickedness for that choice.

He confessed that he had chosen that form by chance. "I might just as well have worked to form sheep into llamas and llamas into sheep. I suppose there is something in the human form that appeals to the artistic turn more powerfully than any animal shape can. But I've not confined myself to man-making. Once or twice—" He was silent, for a minute perhaps. "These years! How they have slipped by! And here I have wasted a day saving your life, and am now wasting an hour explaining myself!"

"But," said I, "I still do not understand. Where is your justification for inflicting all this pain? The only thing that could excuse vivisection to me would be some application—"

"Precisely," said he. "But, you see, I am differently constituted. We are on different platforms. You are a materialist."

"I am *not* a materialist," I began hotly.

"In my view—in my view. For it is just this question of pain that parts us. So long as visible or audible pain turns you sick; so long as your own pains drive you; so long as pain underlies your propositions about sin—so long, I tell you, you are an animal, thinking a little less obscurely what an animal feels. This pain—"

I gave an impatient shrug at such sophistry.

"Oh, but it is such a little thing! A mind truly opened to what science has to teach must see that it is a little thing. It may be that save in this little planet, this speck of cosmic dust, invisible long before the nearest star could be attained—it may be, I say, that nowhere else does this thing called *pain* occur. But the laws we feel our way towards— Why, even on this earth, even among living things, what pain is there?"

As he spoke he drew a little penknife from his pocket, opened the smaller blade, and moved his chair so that I could see

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his thigh. Then, choosing the place deliberately, he drove the blade into his leg and withdrew it.

"No doubt," he said, "you have seen that before. It does not hurt a pin-prick. But what does it show? The capacity for pain is not needed in the muscle, and it is not placed there—is but little needed in the skin, and only here and there over the thigh is a spot capable of feeling pain. Pain is simply our intrinsic medical adviser to warn us and stimulate us. Not all living flesh is painful; nor is all nerve, not even all sensory nerve. There's no tint of pain, real pain, in the sensations of the optic nerve. If you wound the optic nerve, you merely see flashes of light—just as disease of the auditory nerve merely means a humming in our ears.

"Plants do not feel pain, nor the lower animals; it's possible that such animals as the starfish and crayfish do not feel pain at all. Then with men, the more intelligent they become, the more intelligently they will see after their own welfare, and the less they will need the goad to keep them out of danger. I never yet heard of a useless thing that was not ground out of existence by evolution sooner or later. Did you? And pain gets needless.

"Then I am a religious man, Prendick, as every sane man must be. It may be, I fancy, that I have seen more of the ways of this world's Maker than you—for I have sought his laws, in *my* way, all my life, while you, I understand, have been collecting butterflies. And I tell you, pleasure and pain have nothing to do with heaven or hell. Pleasure and pain—bah! What is your theologian's ecstasy but Mahomet's houri in the dark? This store which men and women set on pleasure and pain, Prendick, is the mark of the beast upon them—the mark of the beast from which they came! Pain, pain and pleasure, they are for us only so long as we wriggle in the dust.

"You see, I went on with this research just the way it led me. That is the only way I ever heard of true research going. I asked a question, devised some method of obtaining an answer, and got a fresh question. Was this possible or that possible? You cannot imagine the strange, colorless delight of these intellectual desires! The thing before you is no longer an animal, a fellow-creature, but a problem! Sympathetic pain—all I know of it I remember as a thing I used to suffer from years ago. I wanted to find out the extreme limit of plasticity in a living shape."

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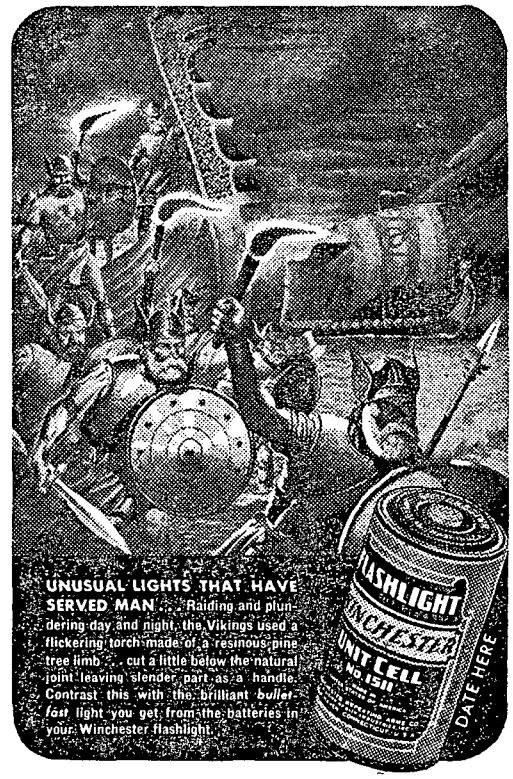
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"But," said I, "the thing is an abomination—"

"To this day I have never troubled about the ethics of the matter," he continued. "The study of Nature makes a man at last as remorseless as Nature. I have gone on, not heeding anything but the question I was pursuing; and the material has—dripped into the huts yonder. It is really eleven years since we came here, I and Montgomery and six Kanakas. I remember the green stillness of the island and the empty ocean about us, as though it was yesterday. The place seemed waiting for me.

"THE stores were landed and the house was built. The Kanakas founded some huts near the ravine. I went to work here upon what I had brought with me. There were some disagreeable things happened at first. I began with a sheep, and killed it after a day and a half by a slip of the scalpel. I took another sheep, and made a thing of pain and fear and left it bound up to heal. It looked quite human to me when I had finished it; but when I went to it I was discontented with it. It remembered me, and was terrified beyond imagination; and it had no more than the wits of a sheep. The more I looked at it the clumsier it seemed, until at last I put the monster out of its misery. These animals without courage, these fear-haunted, pain-driven things, without a spark of pugnacious energy to face torment—they are no good for man-making.

"Then I took a gorilla I had; and upon that, working with infinite care and mastering difficulty after difficulty, I made my first man. All the week, night and day, I molded him. With him it was chiefly the brain that needed molding; much had to be added, much changed. I thought him a fair specimen of the negroid type when I had finished him, and he lay bandaged, bound, and motionless before me. It was only when his life was assured that I left him and came into this room again, and found Montgomery much as you are. He had heard some of the cries as the thing grew human—cries like those that disturbed *you* so. I didn't take him completely into my confidence at first. And the Kanakas too, had realized something of it. They were scared out of their wits by the sight of me.

I got Montgomery over to me—in a way; but I and he had the hardest job to prevent the Kanakas deserting. Finally they did; and so we lost the yacht.

"I spent many days educating the brute—altogether I had him for three or four months. I taught him the rudiments of English; gave him ideas of counting; even made the thing read the alphabet. But at that he was slow, though I've met with idiots slower. He began with a clean sheet, mentally; had no memories left in his mind of what he had been. When his scars were quite healed, and he was no longer anything but painful and stiff, and able to converse a little, I took him yonder and introduced him to the Kanakas as an interesting stowaway.

"They were horribly afraid of him at first, somehow—which offended me rather, for I was conceited about him; but his ways seemed so mild, and he was so abject, that after a time they received him and took his education in hand. He was quick to learn, very imitative and adaptive, and built himself a hovel rather better, it seemed to me, than their own shanties. There was one among the boys a bit of a missionary, and he taught the thing to read, or at least to pick out letters, and gave him some rudimentary ideas of morality; but it seems the beast's habits were not all that is desirable.

"I rested from work for some days after this, and was in a mind to write an account of the whole affair to wake up English physiology. Then I came upon the creature squatting up in a tree and gibbering at two of the Kanakas who had been teasing him. I threatened him, told him the inhumanity of such a proceeding, aroused his sense of shame, and came home resolved to do better before I took my work back to England. I *have* been doing better. But somehow the things drift back again: the stubborn beast-flesh grows day by day back again. But I mean to do better things still. I mean to conquer that. This puma. . . .

"But that's the story. All the Kanaka boys are dead now; one fell overboard of the launch, and one died of a wounded heel that he poisoned in some way with plant-juice. Three went away in the yacht, and I suppose and hope were drowned. The other one—was killed. Well, I have replaced them. Montgomery went on much as you are disposed to do at first, and then—"

"What became of the other one?" said I, sharply—"the other Kanaka who was killed?"

"The fact is, after I had made a number of human creatures I made a Thing." He hesitated.

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"Yes," said I.

"It was killed."

"I don't understand," said I; "do you mean to say—"

"It killed the Kanakas—yes. It killed several other things that it caught. We chased it for a couple of days. It only got loose by accident—I never meant it to get away. It wasn't finished. It was purely an experiment. It was a limbless thing, with a horrible face, that writhed along the ground in a serpentine fashion. It was immensely strong, and in infuriating pain. It lurked in the woods for some days, until we hunted it; and then it wriggled into the northern part of the island, and we divided the party to close in upon it. Montgomery insisted upon coming with me. The man had a rifle; and when his body was found, one of the barrels was curved into the shape of an S and very nearly bitten through. Montgomery shot the thing. After that I stuck to the ideal of humanity—except for little things."

HE BECAME silent. I sat in silence watching his face.

"So for twenty years altogether—counting nine years in England—I have been going on; and there is still something in everything I do that defeats me, makes me dissatisfied, challenges me to further efforts. Sometimes I rise above my level, sometimes I fall below it; but always I fall short of the things I dream. The human shape I can get now, almost with ease, so that it is lithe and graceful, or thick and strong; but often there is trouble with the hands and the claws—painful things, that I dare not shape too freely. But it is in the subtle grafting and reshaping one must needs do to the brain that my trouble lies. The intelligence is often oddly low, with unaccountable blank ends, unexpected gaps. And least satisfactory of all is something that I cannot touch, somewhere—I cannot determine where—in the seat of the emotions. Cravings, instincts, desires that harm humanity, a strange hidden reservoir to burst forth suddenly and inundate the whole being of the creature with anger, hate, or fear.

"These creatures of mine seemed strange and uncanny to you so soon as you began to observe them; but to me, just after I make them, they seem to be indisputably human beings. It's afterwards, as I observe them, that the persuasion fades. First one animal trait, then another, creeps to the surface and stares out at me. But I will conquer yet! Each time I dip a living creature into the bath of burning pain, I say, 'This time I will burn out all the animal; this time I will make a rational crea-

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ture of my own!' After all, what is ten years? Men have been a hundred thousand in the making." He thought darkly. "But I am drawing near the fastness. This puma of mine—" After a silence, "And they revert. As soon as my hand is taken from them the beast begins to creep back, begins to assert itself again." Another long silence.

"Then you take the things you make into those dens?" said I.

"They go. I turn them out when I begin to feel the beast in them, and presently they wander there. They all dread this house and me. There is a kind of travesty of humanity over there. Montgomery knows about it, for he interferes in their affairs. He has trained one or two of them to our service. He's ashamed of it, but I believe he half likes some of those beasts. It's his business, not mine. They only sicken me with a sense of failure. I take no interest in them. I fancy they follow in the lines the Kanaka missionary marked out, and have a kind of mockery of a rational life, poor beasts! There's something they call the Law. Sing hymns about 'all thine.'

"They build themselves their dens, gather fruit, and pull herbs—marry even. But I can see through it all, see into their very souls, and see there nothing but the souls of beasts, beasts that perish, anger and the lusts to live and gratify themselves— Yet they're odd; complex, like everything else alive. There is a kind of upward striving in them, part vanity, part waste emotion, part waste curiosity. It only mocks me. I have some hope of that puma. I have worked hard at her head and brain—

"And now," said he, standing up after a long gap of silence, during which we had each pursued our own thoughts, "what do you think? Are you in fear of me still?"

I looked at him, and saw but a white-faced, white-haired man, with calm eyes. Save for his serenity, the touch almost of beauty that resulted from his set tranquillity and his magnificent build, he might have passed muster among a hundred other comfortable old gentlemen. Then I shivered.

By way of answer to his second question, I handed him a revolver with either hand.

"Keep them," he said, and snatched at a yawn. He stood up, stared at me for a moment, and smiled. "You have had two eventful days," said he. "I should advise some sleep. I'm glad it's all clear. Good-night." He thought me over for a moment, then went out by the inner door.

I immediately turned the key in the outer one. I sat down again; sat for a time in a kind of stagnant mood, so weary, emotionally, mentally, and physically, that I could not think beyond the point at which he had left me. The black window stared at me like an eye. At last with an effort I put out the light and got into the hammock. Very soon I was asleep.

I WOKE early. Moreau's explanation stood before my mind, clear and definite, from the moment of my awakening. I got out of the hammock and went to the door to assure myself that the key was turned. Then I tried the window-bar, and found it firmly fixed. That these man-like creatures were in truth only bestial monsters, mere grotesque travesties of men, filled me with a vague uncertainty which was far worse than any definite fear.

A tapping came at the door, and I heard the glutinous accents of M'ling speaking. I pocketed one of the revolvers (keeping one hand upon it) and opened to him.

"Good-morning, sair," he said, bringing in, in addition to the customary herb-breakfast, an ill-cooked rabbit. Montgomery followed him. His roving eye caught the position of my arm and he smiled askew.

The puma was resting to heal that day; but Moreau, who was singularly solitary in his habits, did not join us. I talked with Montgomery to clear my ideas of the way in which the Beast Folk lived. In particular, I was urgent to know how these inhuman monsters were kept from falling upon Moreau and Montgomery and from rending one another. He explained to me that the comparative safety of Moreau and himself was due to the limited mental scope of these monsters. In spite of their increased intelligence and the tendency of their animal instincts to reawaken, they had certain *fixed ideas* implanted by Moreau in their minds, which absolutely bounded their imaginations. They were really hypnotized; had been told that certain things were impossible, and that certain things were not to be done, and these prohibitions were woven into the texture of their minds beyond any possibility of disobedience or dispute.

Certain matters, however, in which old instinct was at war with Moreau's convenience, were in a less stable condition. A series of propositions called the Law (I had already heard them recited) battled

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in their minds with the deep-seated, ever-rebellious cravings of their animal natures. This Law they were ever repeating, I found, and ever breaking. Both Montgomery and Moreau displayed particular solicitude to keep them ignorant of the taste of blood; they feared the inevitable suggestions of that flavor.

Montgomery told me that the Law, especially among the feline Beast People, became oddly weakened about nightfall; that then the animal was at its strongest; that a spirit of adventure sprang up in them at the dusk, when they would dare things they never seemed to dream about by day. To that I owed my stalking by the Leopard-man, on the night of my arrival. But during these earlier days of my stay they broke the Law only furtively and after dark; in the daylight there was a general atmosphere of respect for its multifarious prohibitions.

And here perhaps I may give a few general facts about the island and the Beast People. The island, which was of irregular outline and lay low upon the wide sea, had a total area, I suppose, of seven or eight square miles.[1] It was volcanic in origin, and was now fringed on three sides by coral reefs; some fumaroles to the northward, and a hot spring, were the only vestiges of the forces that had long since originated it. Now and then a faint quiver of earthquake would be sensible, and sometimes the ascent of the spire of smoke would be rendered tumultuous by gusts of steam; but that was all.

The population of the island, Montgomery informed me, now numbered rather more than sixty of these strange creations of Moreau's art, not counting the smaller monstrosities which lived in the undergrowth and were without human form. Altogether he had made nearly a hundred and twenty; but many had died, and others—like the writhing Footless Thing of which he had told me—had come by violent ends. In answer to my question, Montgomery said that they actually bore offspring, but that these generally died. When they lived, Moreau took them and stamped the human form upon them. There was no evidence of the inheritance of their acquired human characteristics. The females were less numerous than the males, and liable to much furtive persecution in spite of the monogamy the Law enjoined.

It would be impossible for me to describe these Beast People in detail; my eye has had no training in details, and unhappily I cannot sketch. Most striking, perhaps, in their general appearance was the disproportion between the legs of these creatures and the length of their bodies; and yet—so relative is our idea of grace—my eye became habituated to their forms, and at last I even fell in with their persuasion that my own long thighs were ungainly. Another point was the forward carriage of the head, and the clumsy and inhuman curvature of the spine. Even the Ape-man lacked that inward sinuous curve of the back which makes the human figure so graceful. Most had their shoulders hunched clumsily, and their short forearms hung weakly at their sides. Few of them were conspicuously hairy, at least until the end of my time upon the island.

The next most obvious deformity was in their faces, almost all of which were prognathous, malformed about the ears, with large and protuberant noses, very furry or very bristly hair, and often strangely-colored or strangely-placed eyes. None could laugh, though the Ape-man had a chattering titter. Beyond these general characters their heads had little in common; each preserved the quality of its particular species: the human mark distorted but did not hide the leopard, the ox, or the sow, or other animal or animals, from which the creature had been molded. The voices, too, varied exceedingly. The hands were always malformed; and though some surprised me by their unexpected human appearance, almost all were deficient in the number of the digits, clumsy about the finger-nails, and lacking any tactile sensibility.

THE two most formidable Animal Men were my Leopard-man and a creature made of hyena and swine. Larger than these were the three bull-creatures who pulled in the boat. Then came the silvery-hairy-man, who was also the Sayer of the Law, M'ling, and a satyr-like creature of ape and goat. There were three Swine-men and a Swine-woman, a mare-rhinoceros-creature, and several other females whose sources I did not ascertain. There were several wolf-creatures, a bear-bull, and a Saint-Bernard-man. I have already described the Ape-man, and there was a particular hateful (an evil-smelling) old woman made of vixen and bear, whom I hated from the beginning. She was said to be a passionate votary of the Law. Smaller creatures were certain dappled youths and

[1] This description corresponds in every respect to Noble's Isle.—C.E.P.

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my little sloth-creature. But enough of this catalogue.

At first I had a shivering horror of the brutes, felt all too keenly that they were still brutes; but insensibly I became a little habituated to the idea of them, and moreover I was affected by Montgomery's attitude towards them. He had been with them so long that he had come to regard them as almost normal human beings. His London days seemed a glorious, impossible past to him. Only once in a year or so did he go to Arica to deal with Moreau's agent, a trader in animals there. He hardly met the finest type of mankind in that seafaring village of Spanish mongrels.

The men aboard-ship, he told me, seemed at first just as strange to him as the Beast Men seemed to me—unnaturally long in the leg, flat in the face, prominent in the forehead, suspicious, dangerous, and cold-hearted. In fact, he did not like men: his heart had warmed to me, he thought, because he had saved my life. I fancied even then that he had a sneaking kindness for some of these metamorphosed brutes, a vicious sympathy with some of their ways, but that he attempted to veil it from me at first.

M'ling, the black-faced man, Montgomery's attendant, the first of the Beast Folk I had encountered, did not live with the others across the island, but in a small kennel at the back of the enclosure. The creature was scarcely so intelligent as the Ape-man, but far more docile, and the most human-looking of all the Beast Folk; and Montgomery had trained it to prepare food, and indeed to discharge all the trivial domestic offices that were required. It was a complex trophy of Moreau's horrible skill—a bear, tainted with dog and ox, and one of the most elaborately made of all his creatures. It treated Montgomery with a strange tenderness and devotion. Sometimes he would notice it, pat it, call it half-mocking, half-jocular names, and so make it caper with extraordinary delight; sometimes he would ill-treat it, especially after he had been at the whiskey, kicking it, beating it, pelting it with sones or lighted fuses. But whether he treated it well or ill, it loved nothing so much as to be near him.

I say I became habituated to the Beast People, that a thousand things which had seemed unnatural and repulsive speedily became natural and ordinary to me. I suppose everything in existence takes its color from the average hue of our surroundings. Montgomery and Moreau were too peculiar and individual to keep my general impressions of humanity well defined. I would see one of the clumsy bovine-creatures who worked the launch, treading heavily through the undergrowth, and find myself asking, trying hard to recall, how he differed from some really human yokel trudging home from his mechanical labors; or I would meet the Fox-bear woman's vulpine, shifty face, strangely human in its speculative cunning, and even imagine I had met it before in some city byway.

Yet every now and then the beast would flash out upon me beyond doubt or denial. An ugly-looking man, a hunchbacked human savage to all appearance, squatting in the aperture of one of the dens, would stretch his arms and yawn, showing with startling suddenness scissor-edged incisors and saber-like canines, keen and brilliant as knives. Or in some narrow pathway, glancing with a transitory daring into the eyes of some lithe, white-swathed female figure, I would suddenly see (with a spasmodic revulsion) that she had split-like pupils, or glancing down note the curving nail with which she held her shapeless wrap about her.

It is a curious thing, by the bye, for which I am quite unable to account, that these weird creatures—the females, I mean—had in the earlier days of my stay an instinctive sense of their own repulsive clumsiness, and displayed a more than human regard for extensive costume.

MY INEXPERIENCE as a writer betrays me, and I wander from the thread of my story. After I had breakfasted with Montgomery, he took me across the island to see the fumarole and the source of the hot spring into whose scalding waters I had blundered on the previous day. Both of us carried whips and loaded revolvers. While going through a leafy jungle on our road thither, we heard a rabbit squealing. We stopped and listened, but we heard no more; and presently we went on our way, and the incident dropped out of our minds.

Montgomery called my attention to certain little pink animals with long hind-legs, that went leaping through the undergrowth. He told me they were creatures made of the offspring of the Beast People, that Moreau had invented. He had fancied they might serve for meat, but a rabbit-like habit of devouring their young had defeated this intention. I had already encountered some of these creatures—once during my moonlight flight from the Leopard-man, and once during my pursuit by Moreau on the previous day.

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By chance, one hopping to avoid us leaped into the hole caused by the uprooting of a wind-blown tree; before it could extricate itself we managed to catch it. It spat like a cat, scratched and kicked vigorously with its hind-legs, and made an attempt to bite; but its teeth were too feeble to inflict more than a painless pinch. It semed to me rather a pretty little creature; and as Montgomery stated that it never destroyed the turf by burrowing, and was very cleanly in its habits, I should imagine it might prove a convenient substitute for the common rabbit in gentlemen's parks.

We also saw on our way the trunk of a tree barked in long strips and splintered deeply. Montgomery called my attention to this. "Not to claw bark of trees, *that* is the Law," he said. "Much some of them care for it!" It was after this, I think, that we met the Satyr and the Ape-man. The Satyr was a gleam of classical memory on the part of Moreau—his face bovine in expression; his voice a harsh bleat, his nether extremities Satanic. He was gnawing the husk of a pod-like fruit as he passed us. Both of them saluted Montgomery.

"Hail," said they, "to the Other with the Whip!"

"There's a Third with a Whip now," said Montgomery stridently. "So you'd better mind!"

"Was he not made?" said the Ape-man. "He said—he said he was made."

The Satyr-man looked curiously at me. "The Third with the Whip, he that walks weeping into the sea, has a thin white face."

"He has a thin long whip," said Montgomery.

"Yesterday he bled and wept," said the Satyr. "You never bleed nor weep. The Master does not bleed or weep."

"Yesterday he asked me of things to eat," said the Ape-man. "He did not know."

Then they spoke inaudible things, and I heard the Satyr laughing.

It was on our way back that we came upon the dead rabbit. The red body of the wretched little beast was rent to pieces, many of the ribs stripped white, and the backbone indisputably gnawed.

At that Montgomery stopped. "Good God!" said he, stooping down, and picking up some of the crushed vertebrae to examine them more closely. "Good God!" he repeated. "What can this mean?"

"Some carnivore of yours has remembered its old habits," I said after a pause. "This backbone has been bitten through."

He stood staring, with his face white and his lip pulled askew. "I don't like this," he said slowly.

"I saw something of the same kind," said I, "the first day I came here."

"The devil you did! What was it?"

"A rabbit with its head twisted off."

"The day you came here?"

"The day I came here. In the undergrowth at the back of the enclosure, when I went out in the evening. The head was completely wrung off."

He gave a long, low whistle.

"And what is more, I have an idea which of your brutes did the thing. It's only a suspicion, you know. Before I came on the rabbit I saw one of your monsters drinking in the stream."

"Sucking his drink?"

"Yes."

"'Not to suck your drink; *that* is the Law.' Much the brutes care for the Law, eh? when Moreau's not about!"

"It was the brute who chased me."

"Of course," said Montgomery; "it's just the way wtih carnivores. After a kill, they drink. It's the taste of blood, you know. What was the brute like?" he continued. "Would you know him again?"

"I think I should know the brute again," I said. "I stunned him. He ought to have a handsome bruise on the forehead of him."

"But then we have to *prove* that he killed the rabbit," said Montgomery. "I wish I'd never brought the things here."

PRESENTLY he woke up and came towards me. "You see," he said, almost in a whisper, "they are all supposed to have a fixed idea against eating anything that runs on land. If some brute has by any accident tasted blood—" He went on some way in silence. "I wonder what can have happened," he said to himself. Then, after a pause again: "I did a foolish thing the other day. That servant of mine—I showed him how to skin and cook a rabbit. It's odd—I saw him licking his hands. It never occurred to me."

Moreau took the matter even more seriously than Montgomery, and I need scarcely say that I was affected by their evident consternation.

"We must make an example," said Moreau. "I've no doubt in my own mind that the Leopard-man was the sinner. But how can we prove it? I wish, Montgomery, you had kept your taste for meat in hand, and gone without these exciting novelties. We

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may find ourselves in a mess yet, through it."

"I'm not even so sure of M'ling," said Montgomery thoughtfully. "I think I *ought* to know him."

In the afternoon, Moreau, Montgomery, myself, and M'ling went across the island to the huts in the ravine. We three were armed; M'ling carried the little hatchet he used in chopping firewood, and some coils of wire. Moreau had a huge cowherd's horn slung over his shoulder.

"You will see a gathering of the Beast People," said Montgomery. "It is a pretty sight!"

We crossed the ravine down which smoked the stream of hot water, and followed the winding pathway through the canebrakes until we reached a wide area covered over with a thick, powdery yellow substance which I believe was sulphur. Above the shoulder of a weedy bank the sea glittered. We came to a kind of shallow natural amphitheater, and here the four of us halted. Then Moreau sounded the horn, and broke the sleeping stillness of the tropical afternoon. He must have had strong lungs. The hooting note rose and rose amidst its echoes, to at last an ear-penetrating intensity.

"Ah!" said Moreau, letting the curved instrument fall to his side again.

Immediately there was a crashing through the yellow canes, and a sound of voices from the dense green jungle that marked the morass through which I had run on the previous day. Then at three or four points on the edge of the sulphurous area appeared the grotesque forms of the Beast People hurrying towards us.

First to arrive was the Satyr, strangely unreal for all that he cast a shadow and tossed the dust with his hoofs. After him from the brake came a monstrous lout, a thing of horse and rhinoceros, chewing a straw as it came; then appeared the Swine-woman and two Wolf-women; then the Fox-bear witch, with her red eyes in her peaked red face, and then others—all hurrying eagerly. As they came forward they began to cringe towards Moreau and chant, quite regardless of one another, fragments of the latter half of the litany of the Law—"*His* is the Hand that wounds; *His* is the Hand that heals," and so forth. As soon as they had approached within a distance of perhaps thirty yards they halted, and bowing on knees and elbows began flinging the white dust upon their heads.

Imagine the scene if you can! We three blue-clad men, with our misshapen black-faced attendant, standing in a wide expanse of sunlit yellow dust under the blazing blue sky, and surrounded by this circle of crouching and gesticulating monstrosities—some almost human save in their subtle expression and gestures, some like cripples, some so strangely distorted as to resemble nothing but the denizens of our wildest dreams; and, beyond, the reedy lines of a canebrake in one direction, a dense tangle of palmtrees on the other, separating us from the ravine with the huts, and to the north the hazy horizon of the Pacific Ocean.

"Sixty-two, sixty-three," counted Moreau. "There are four more."

"I do not see the Leopard-man," said I.

Presently Moreau sounded the great horn again, and at the sound of it all the Beast People writhed and groveled in the dust. Then, slinking out of the canebrake, stooping near the ground and trying to join the dust-throwing circle behind Moreau's back, came the Leopard-man. The last of the Beast People to arrive was the little Ape-man. The earlier animals, hot and weary with their groveling, shot vicious glances at him.

"Cease!" said Moreau, in his firm, loud voice; and the Beast People sat back upon their hams and rested from their worshiping.

"Where is the Sayer of the Law?" said Moreau and the hairy-gray monster bowed his face in the dust.

"Say the words!" said Moreau.

FORTHWITH all in the kneeling assembly, swaying from side to side and dashing up the sulphur with their hands—first the right hand and a puff of dust, and then the left—began once more to chant their strange litany. When they reached, "Not to eat Flesh or Fowl, *that* is the Law," Moreau held up his lank white hand.

"Stop!" he cried, and there fell absolute silence upon them all.

I think they all knew and dreaded what was coming. I looked round at their strange faces. When I saw their wincing attitudes and the furtive dread in their bright eyes, I wondered that I had ever believed them to be men.

"That Law has been broken!" said Moreau.

"None escape," from the faceless creature with the silvery hair. "None escape," repeated the kneeling circle of Beast People.

"Who is he?" cried Moreau, and looked

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round at their faces, cracking his whip. I fancied the Hyena-swine looked dejected, so too did the Leopard-man. Moreau stopped, facing this creature, who cringed towards him with the memory and dread of infinite torment. "Who is he?" repeated Moreau, in a voice of thunder.

"Evil is he who breaks the Law," chanted the Sayer of the Law.

Moreau looked into the eyes of the Leopard-man, and seemed to be dragging the very soul out of the creature.

"Who breaks the Law—" said Moreau, taking his eyes off his victim, and turning towards us (it seemed to me there was a touch of exultation in his voice).

"Goes back to the House of Pain," they all clamored—"goes back to the House of Pain, O Master!"

"Back to the House of Pain—back to the House of Pain," gabbled the Ape-man, as though the idea was sweet to him.

"Do you hear?" said Moreau, turning back to the criminal. "My friend— Hullo!"

For the Leopard-man, released from Moreau's eye, had risen straight from his knees, and now, with eyes aflame and his huge feline tusks flashing out from under his curling lips, leaped towards his tormentor. I am convinced that only the madness of unendurable fear could have prompted this attack. The whole circle of threescore monsters seemed to rise about us. I drew my revolver. The two figures collided. I saw Moreau reeling back from the Leopard-man's blow. There was a furious yelling and howling all about us. Every one was moving rapidly. For a moment I thought it was a general revolt. The furious face of the Leopard-man flashed by mine, with M'ling close in pursuit. I saw the yellow eyes of the Hyena-swine blazing with excitement, his attitude as if he were half resolved to attack me.

The Satyr, too, glared at me over the Hyena-swine's hunched shoulders. I heard the crack of Moreau's pistol, and saw the pink flash dart across the tumult. The whole crowd seemed to swing round in the direction of the glint of fire, and I too was swung round by the magnetism of the movement. In another second I was running, one of a tumultuous shouting crowd, in pursuit of the escaping Leopard-man.

That is all I can tell definitely. I saw the Leopard-man strike Moreau, and then everything spun about me until I was running headlong. M'ling was ahead, close in pursuit of the fugitive. Behind, their tongues already lolling out, ran the Wolf-women in great leaping strides. The Swine folk followed, squealing with excitement, and the two Bull-men in their swathings of white. Then came Moreau in a cluster of the Beast People, his wide-brimmed straw hat blown off, his revolver in hand, and his lank white hair streaming out. The Hyena-swine ran beside me, keeping pace with me and glancing furtively at me out of his feline eyes, and the others came pattering and shouting behind us.

The Leopard-man went bursting his way through the long canes, which sprang back as he passed, and rattled in M'ling's face. We others in the rear found a trampled path for us when we reached the brake. The chase lay through the brake for perhaps a quarter of a mile, and then plunged into a dense thicket, which retarded our movements exceedingly, though we went through it in a crowd together—fronds flicking into our faces, ropy creepers catching us under the chin or gripping our ankles, thorny plants hooking into and tearing cloth and flesh together.

"He has gone on all-fours through this," panted Moreau, now just ahead of me.

"None escape," said the Wolf-bear, laughing into my face with the exultation of hunting.

We burst out again among rocks, and saw the quarry ahead running lightly on all-fours and snarling at us over his shoulder. At that the Wolf Folk howled with delight. The Thing was still clothed, and at a distance its face still seemed human; but the carriage of its four limbs was feline, and the furtive droop of its shoulder was distinctly that of a hunted animal. It leaped over some thorny yellow-flowering bushes, and was hidden. M'ling was halfway across the space.

CHAPTER V

MONTGOMERY'S "BANK HOLIDAY"

MOST of us now had lost the first speed of the chase, and had fallen into a longer and steadier stride. I saw as we traversed the open that the pursuit was now spreading from a column into a line. The Hyena-swine still ran close to me, watching me as it ran, every now and then puckering its muzzle with a snarling laugh. At the edge of the rocks the Leopard-man, realizing that he was making for the projecting cape upon which he had stalked me on the night of my arrival, had doubled in the undergrowth;

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but Montgomery had seen the maneuver, and turned him again.

So, panting, tumbling against rocks, torn by brambles, impeded by ferns and reeds, I helped to pursue the Leopard-man who had broken the Law, and the Hyena-swine ran, laughing savagely, by my side. I staggered on, my head reeling and my heart beating against my ribs, tired almost to death, and yet not daring to lose sight of the chase lest I should be left alone with this horrible companion. I staggered on in spite of infinite fatigue and the dense heat of the tropical afternoon.

At last the fury of the hunt slackened. We had pinned the wretched brute into a corner of the island. Moreau, whip in hand, marshaled us all into an irregular line, and we advanced now slowly, shouting to one another as we advanced and tightening the cordon about our victim. He lurked noiseless and invisible in the bushes through which I had run from him during that midnight pursuit.

"Steady!" cried Moreau, "steady!" as the ends of the line crept round the tangle of undergrowth and hemmed the brute in.

"'Ware a rush!" came the voice of Montgomery from beyond the thicket.

I was on the slope above the bushes; Montgomery and Moreau beat along the beach beneath. Slowly we pushed in among the fretted network of branches and leaves. The quarry was silent.

"Back to the House of Pain, the House of Pain, the House of Pain!" yelped the voice of the Ape-man, some twenty yards to the right.

When I heard that, I forgave the poor wretch all the fear he had inspired in me. I heard the twigs snap and the boughs swish aside before the heavy tread of the Horse-rhinoceros upon my right. Then suddenly through a polygon of green, in the half darkness under the luxuriant growth, I saw the creature we were hunting. I halted. He was crouched together into the smallest possible compass, his luminous green eyes turned over his shoulder regarding me.

It may seem a strange contradiction in me—I cannot explain the fact—but now, seeing the creature there in a perfectly animal attitude, with the light gleaming in its eyes and its imperfectly human face distorted with terror, I realized again the fact of its humanity. In another moment other of its pursuers would see it, and it would be overpowered and captured, to experience once more the horrible tortures of the enclosure. Abruptly I slipped out my revolver, aimed between its terror-struck eyes, and fired. As I did so, the Hyena-swine saw the Thing, and flung itself upon it with an eager cry, thrusting thirsty teeth into its neck. All about me the green masses of the thicket were swaying and cracking as the Beast People came rushing together. One face and then another appeared.

"Don't kill it, Pendrick!" cried Moreau. "Don't kill it!" and I saw him stooping as he pushed through under the fronds of the big ferns.

In another moment he had beaten off the Hyena-swine with the handle of his whip, and he and Montgomery were keeping away the excited carnivorous Beast People, and particularly M'ling, from the still quivering body. The hairy-gray Thing came sniffing at the corpse under my arm. The other animals, in their animal ardor, jostled me to get a nearer view.

"Confound you, Pendrick!" said Moreau. "I wanted him."

"I'm sorry," said I, though I was not. "It was the impulse of the moment." I felt sick with exertion and excitement. Turning, I pushed my way out of the crowding Beast People and went on alone up the slope towards the higher part of the headland. Under the shouted directions of Moreau I heard the three white-swathed Bull-men begin dragging the victim down towards the water.

It was easy now for me to be alone. The Beast People manifested a quite human curiosity about the dead body, and followed it in a thick knot, sniffing and growling at it as the Bull-men dragged it down the beach. I went to the headland and watched the Bull-men, black against the evening sky, as they carried the weighted dead body out to sea; and like a wave across my mind came the realization of the unspeakable aimlessness of things upon the island.

Upon the beach among the rocks beneath me were the Ape-man, the Hyena-swine, and several other of the Beast People, standing about Montgomery and Moreau. They were all still intensely excited, and all overflowing with noisy expressions of their loyalty to the Law; yet I felt an absolute assurance in my own mind that the Hyena-swine was implicated in the rabbit-killing. A strange persuasion came upon me, that, save for the grossness of the line, the grotesqueness of the forms, I had here before me the whole balance of human life in miniature, the whole interplay of instinct, reason, and

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fate in its simplest form. The Leopard-man had happened to go under; that was all the difference. Poor brute!

Poor brutes! I began to see the viler aspect of Moreau's cruelty. I had not thought before of the pain and trouble that came these poor victims after they had passed from Moreau's hands. I had shivered only at the days of actual torment in the enclosure. But now that seemed to me the lesser part. Before, they had been beasts, their instincts fitly adapted to their surroundings, and happy as living things may be. Now they stumbled in the shackles of humanity, lived in a fear that never died, fretted by a law they could not understand; their mock-human existence, begun in an agony, was one long internal struggle, one long dread of Moreau—and for what? It was the wantonness of it that stirred me.

Had Moreau had any intelligible object, I could have sympathized at least a little with him. I am not so squeamish about pain as that. I could have forgiven him a little even, had his motive been only hate. But he was so irresponsible, so utterly careless! His curiosity, his mad, aimless investigations, drove him on; and the Things were thrown out to live a year or so, to struggle and blunder and suffer, and at last to die painfully. They were wretched in themselves; the old animal hate moved them to trouble one another; the Law held them back from a brief hot struggle and a decisive end to their natural animosities.

In those days my fear of the Beast People went the way of my personal fear for Moreau. I fell indeed into a morbid state, deep and enduring, and alien to fear, which has left permanent scars upon my mind. I must confess that I lost faith in the sanity of the world when I saw it suffering the painful disorder of this island. A blind Fate, a vast pitiless Mechanism, seemed to cut and shape the fabric of existence; and I, Moreau (by his passion for research), Montgomery (by his passion for drink), the Beast People with their instincts and mental restrictions, were torn and crushed, ruthlessly, inevitably, amid the infinite complexity of its incessant wheels. But this condition did not come all at once: I think indeed that I anticipate a little in speaking of it now.

SCARCELY six weeks passed before I had lost every feeling but dislike and abhorrence for this infamous experiment of Moreau's. My one idea was to get away from these horrible caricatures of my Maker's image, back to the sweet and wholesome intercourse of men. My fellow-creatures, from whom I was thus separated, began to assume idyllic virtue and beauty in my memory. My first friendship with Montgomery did not increase. His long separation from humanity, his secret vice of drunkenness, his evident sympathy with the Beast People, tainted him to me. Several times I let him go alone among them. I avoided intercourse with them in every possible way. I spent an increasing proportion of my time upon the beach, looking for some liberating sail that never appeared—until one day there fell upon us an appalling disaster, which put an altogether different aspect upon my strange surroundings.

It was about seven or eight weeks after my landing—rather more, I think, though I had not troubled to keep account of the time—when this catastrophe occurred. It happened in the early morning—I should think about six. I had risen and breakfasted early, having been aroused by the noise of three Beast Men carrying wood into the enclosure.

After breakfast I went to the open gateway of the enclosure, and stood there smoking a cigarette and enjoying the freshness of the early morning. Moreau presently came round the corner of the enclosure and greeted me. He passed by me, and I heard him behind me unlock and enter his laboratory. So indurated was I at that time to the abomination of the place, that I heard without a touch of emotion the puma victim begin another day of torture. It met its persecutor with a shriek, almost exactly like that of an angry virago.

Then suddenly something happened—I do not know what, to this day. I heard a short, sharp cry behind me, a fall, and turning saw an awful face rushing upon me—not human, not animal, but hellish, brown, seamed with red branching scars, red drops starting out upon it, and the lidless eyes ablaze. I threw up my arm to defend myself from the blow that flung me headlong with a broken forearm; and the great monster, swathed in lint and with red-stained bandages fluttering about it, leaped over me and passed. I rolled over and over down the beach, tried to sit up, and collapsed upon my broken arm. Then Moreau appeared, his massive white face all the more terrible for the blood that trickled from his forehead. He carried a revolver in one hand. He scarcely

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glanced at me, but rushed off at once in pursuit of the puma.

I tried the other arm and sat up. The muffled figure in front ran in great striding leaps along the beach, and Moreau followed her. She turned her head and saw him, then doubling abruptly made for the bushes. She gained upon him at every stride. I saw her plunge into them, and Moreau, running slantingly to intercept her, fired and missed as she disappeared. Then he too vanished in the green confusion.

I stared after them, and then the pain in my arm flamed up, and with a groan I staggered to my feet. Montgomery appeared in the doorway, and with his revolver in his hand.

"Great God, Pendrick!" he said, not noticing that I was hurt, "that brute's loose! Tore the fetter out of the wall! Have you seen them?" Then sharply, seeing I gripped my arm, "What's the matter?"

"I was standing in the doorway," said I.

He came forward and took my arm. "Blood on the sleeve," said he, and rolled back the flannel. He pocketed his weapon, felt my arm about painfully, and led me inside. "Your arm is broken," he said, and then, "Tell me exactly how it happened—what happened?"

I told him what I had seen; told him in broken sentences, with gasps of pain between them, and very dexterously and swiftly he bound my arm meanwhile. He slung it from my shoulder, stood back and looked at me.

"You'll do," he said. "And now?"

He thought. Then he went out and locked the gates of the enclosure. He was absent some time.

I was chiefly concerned about my arm. The incident seemed merely one more of many horrible things. I sat down in the deck-chair, and I must admit swore heartily at the island. The first dull feeling of injury in my arm had already given way to a burning pain when Montgomery reappeared. His face was rather pale, and he showed more of his lower gums than ever.

"I can neither see nor hear anything of him," he said. "I've been thinking he may want my help." He stared at me with his expressionless eyes. "That was a strong brute," he said. "It simply wrenched its fetter out of the wall." He went to the window, then to the door, and there turned to me. "I shall go after him," he said. "There's another revolver I can leave with you. To tell you the truth, I feel anxious somehow."

He obtained the weapon, and put it ready to my hand on the table; then went out, leaving a restless contagion in the air. I did not sit long after he left, but took the revolver in hand and went to the doorway.

THE morning was as still as death. Not a whisper of wind was stirring; the sea was like polished glass, the sky empty, the beach desolate. In my half-excited, half-feverish state, this stillness of things oppressed me. I tried to whistle, and the tune died away. I swore again—the second time that morning. Then I went to the corner of the enclosure and stared inland at the green bush that had swallowed up Moreau and Montgomery. When would they return, and how?

Then far away up the beach a little gray Beast Man appeared, ran down to the water's edge and began splashing about. I strolled back to the doorway, then to the corner again, and so began pacing to and fro like a sentinel upon duty. Once I was arrested by the distant voice of Montgomery bawling, "Coo-ee—Mor-eau!" My arm became less painful but very hot. I got feverish and thirsty. My shadow grew shorter. I watched the distant figure until it went away again. Would Moreau and Montgomery never return? Three seabirds began fighting for some stranded treasure.

Then from far away behind the enclosure I heard a pistol-shot. A long silence, and then came another. Then a yelling cry nearer, and another dismal gap of silence. My unfortunate imagination set to work to torment me. Then suddenly a shot close by. I went to the corner, startled, and saw Montgomery—his face scarlet, his hair disordered, and the knee of his trousers torn. His face expressed profound consternation. Behind him slouched the Beast Man, M'ling, and round M'ling's jaws were some queer dark stains.

"Has he come?" said Montgomery.

"Moreau?" said I. "No."

"My God!" The man was panting, almost sobbing. "Go back in," he said, taking my arm. "They're mad. They're all rushing about mad. What can have happened? I don't know. I'll tell you, when my breath comes. Where's some brandy?"

Montgomery limped before me into the room and sat down in the deck-chair. M'ling flung himself down just outside the doorway and began panting like a dog. Montgomery sat staring in front of him at nothing, recovering his breath. After

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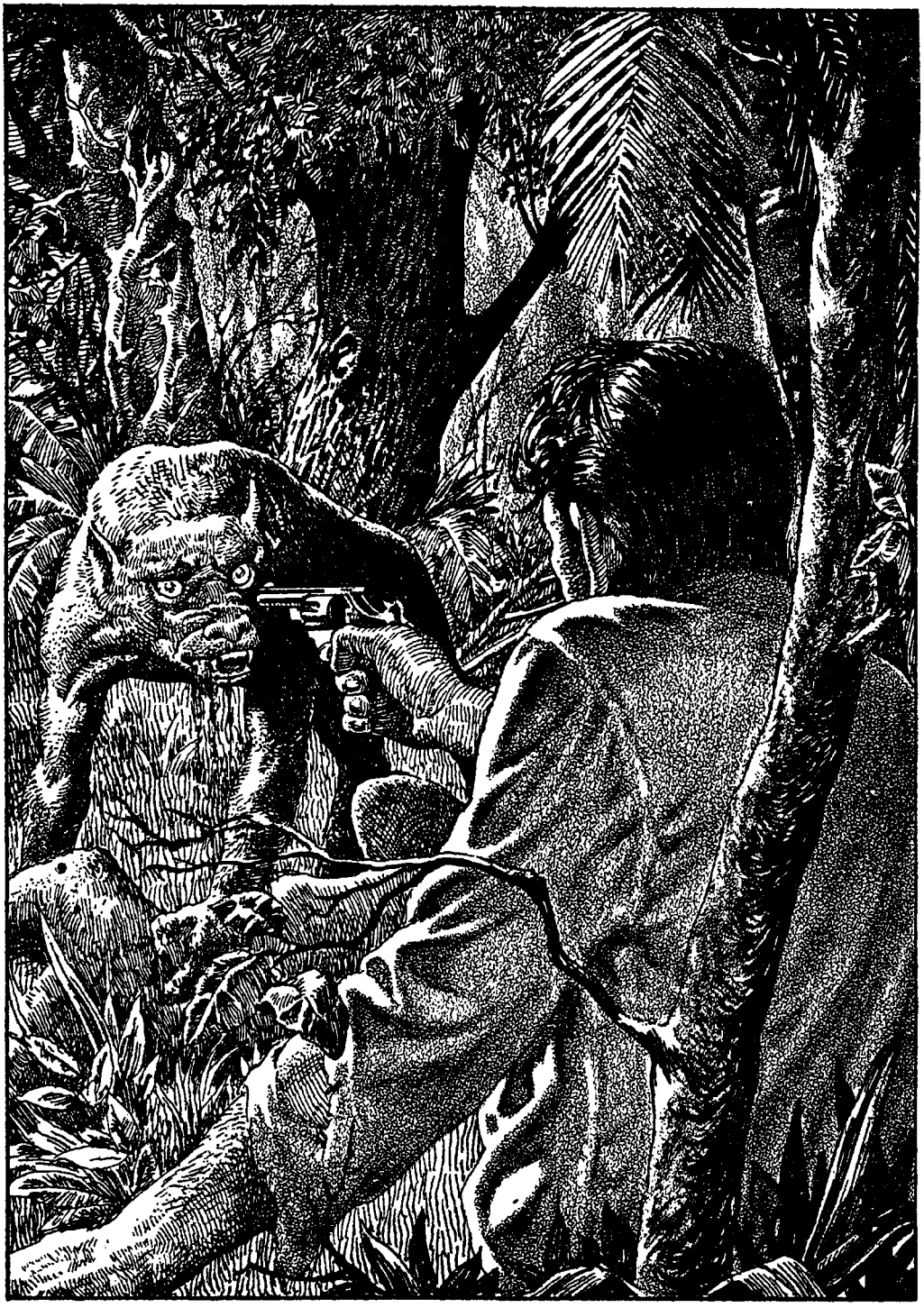

The brute made no sign of retreat, but its ears went back. . . .

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some minutes he began to tell me what had happened.

He had followed their track from some way. It was plain enough at first on account of the crushed and broken bushes, white rags torn from the puma's bandages, and occasional smears of blood on the leaves of the shrubs and undergrowth. He lost the track, however, on the stony ground beyond the stream where I had seen the Beast Man drinking, and went wandering aimlessly westward shouting Moreau's name. Then M'ling had come to him carrying a light hatchet. M'ling had seen nothing of the puma affair; had been felling wood, and heard him calling. They went on shouting together. Two Beast Men came crouching and peering at them through the undergrowth, with gestures and a furtive carriage that alarmed Montgomery by their strangeness. He hailed them, and they fled guiltily. He stopped shouting after that, and after wandering some time farther in an undecided way, determined to visit the huts.

He found the ravine deserted.

Growing more alarmed every minute, he began to retrace his steps. Then it was he encountered the two Swine-men I had seen dancing on the night of my arrival; blood-stained they were about the mouth, and intensely excited. They came crashing through the ferns, and stopped with fierce faces when they saw him. He cracked the whip in some trepidation, and forthwith they rushed at him. Never before had a Beast Man dared to do that. One he shot through the head; M'ling flung himself upon the other, and the two rolled grappling. M'ling got his brute under and with his teeth in its throat, and Montgomery shot that too as it struggled in M'ling's grip. He had some difficulty in inducing M'ling to come on with him. Thence they had hurried back to me. On the way, M'ling had suddenly rushed into a thicket and driven out an undersized Ocelot-man, also blood-stained, and lame through a wound in the foot. This brute had run a little way and then turned savagely at bay, and Montgomery—with a certain wantonness, I thought—had shot him.

"What does it all mean?" said I.

He shook his head, and turned once more to the brandy.

WHEN I saw Montgomery swallow a third dose of brandy, I took it upon myself to interfere. He was already more than half fuddled. I told him that some serious thing must have happened to Moreau by this time, or he would have returned before this, and that it behooved us to ascertain what that catastrophe was. Montgomery raised some feeble objections, and at last agreed. We had some food, and then all three of us started.

It is possibly due to the tension of my mind at the time, but even now that start into the hot stillness of the tropical afternoon is a singularly vivid impression. M'ling went first, his shoulder hunched, his strange black head moving with quick starts as he peered first on this side of the way and then on that. He was unarmed; his axe he had dropped when he encountered the Swine-man. Teeth were his weapons, when it came to fighting.

Montgomery followed with stumbling footsteps, his hands in his pockets, his face downcast; he was in a state of muddled sullenness with me on account of the brandy. My left arm was in a sling (it was lucky it was my left) and I carried my revolver in my right. Soon we traced a narrow path through the wild luxuriance of the island, going northwestward; and presently M'ling stopped, and became rigid with watchfulness. Montgomery almost staggered into him, and then stopped too. Then, listening intently, we heard coming through the trees the sound of voices and footsteps approaching us.

"He is dead," said a deep, vibrating voice.

"He is not dead; he is not dead," jabbered another.

"We saw, we saw," said several voices.

"*Hul*-lo!" suddenly shouted Montgomery. "Hullo, there!"

"Confound you!" said I, and gripped my pistol.

There was a silence, then a crashing among the interlacing vegetation, first here, then there, and then half-a-dozen faces appeared—strange faces, lit by a strange light. M'ling made a growling noise in his throat. I recognized the Ape-man: I had indeed already identified his voice, and two of the white-swathed brown-featured creatures I had seen in Montgomery's boat. With these were the two dappled brutes and that gray, horribly crooked creature who said the Law, with gray hair streaming down its cheeks, heavy gray eyebrows, and gray locks pouring off from a central parting upon its sloping forehead—heavy, faceless thing, with strange red eyes, looking at us curiously from amidst the green.

For a space no one spoke. Then Montgomery hiccoughed, "Who—said he was dead?"

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The Monkey-man looked guiltily at the hairy-gray Thing. "He is dead," said this monster. "They saw."

There was nothing threatening about this detachment, at any rate. They seemed awe-stricken and puzzled.

"Where is he?" said Montgomery.

"Beyond," and the gray creature pointed.

"Is there a Law now?" asked the Monkey-man. "Is it still to be this and that? Is he dead indeed?"

"Is there a Law?" repeated the man in white. "Is there a Law, thou Other with the Whip?"

"He is dead," said the hairy-gray Thing.

And they all stood watching us.

"Prendick," said Montgomery, turning his dull eyes to me. "He's dead, evidently."

I had been standing behind him during this colloquy. I began to see how things lay with them. I suddenly stepped in front of Montgomery and lifted up my voice.

"Children of the Law," I said, "he is *not* dead!" M'ling turned his sharp eyes on me. "He had changed his shape; he has changed his body," I went on. "For a time you will not see him. He is—there," I pointed upward, "where he can watch you. You cannot see him, but he can see you. Fear the Law!"

I looked at them squarely. They flinched.

"He is great, he is good," said the Ape-man, peering fearfully upward among the dense trees.

"And the other Thing?" I demanded.

"The Thing that bled, and ran screaming and sobbing—that is dead too," said the gray Thing, still regarding me.

"That's well," grunted Montgomery.

"The Other with the Whip—" began the gray Thing.

"Well?" said I.

"Said he was dead."

But Montgomery was still sober enough to understand my motive in denying Moreau's death. "He is not dead," he said slowly, "not dead at all. No more dead than I am."

"Some," said I, "have broken the Law: they will die. Some have died. Show us now where his old body lies—the body he cast away because he had no more need of it."

"It is this way, Man who walked in the Sea," said the gray Thing.

And with these six creatures guiding us, we went through the tumult of ferns and creepers and tree-stems towards the north-west. Then came a yelling, a crashing among the branches, and a little pink homunculus rushed by us shrieking. Immediately after appeared a feral monster in headlong pursuit, blood-bedabbled, who was amongst us almost before he could stop his career. The gray Thing leaped aside. M'ling, with a snarl, flew at it, and was struck aside. Montgomery fired and missed, bowed his head, threw up his arm, and turned to run. I fired, and the Thing still came on; fired again, point-blank, into its ugly face. I saw its features vanish in a flash: its face was driven in. Yet is passed me, gripped Montgomery, and holding him, fell headlong beside him and pulled him sprawling upon itself in its death-agony.

I found myself alone with M'ling, the dead brute, and the prostrate man. Montgomery raised himself slowly and stared in a muddled way at the shattered Beast Man beside him. It more than half sobered him. He scrambled to his feet. Then I saw the gray Thing returning cautiously through the trees.

"See," said I, pointing to the dead brute, "is the Law not alive? This came of breaking the Law."

He peered at the body. "He sends the Fire that kills," said he, in his deep voice, repeating part of the Ritual. The others gathered round and stared for a space.

At last we drew near the westward extremity of the island. We came upon the gnawed and mutilated body of the puma, its shoulder-bone smashed by a bullet, and perhaps twenty yards farther found at last what we sought. Moreau lay face downward in a trampled space in a canebrake. One hand was almost severed at the wrist, and his silvery hair was dabbled in blood. His head had been battered in by the fetters of the puma. The broken canes beneath him were smeared with blood. His revolver we could not find. Montgomery turned him over.

Resting at intervals, and with the help of the seven Beast People (for he was a heavy man) we carried Moreau back to the enclosure. The night was darkling. Twice we heard unseen creatures howling and shrieking past our little band, and once the little pink sloth-creature appeared and stared at us, and vanished again. But we were not attacked again. At the gates of the enclosure our company of Beast People left us, M'ling going with the rest. We locked ourselves in, and then took Moreau's mangled body into the yard and laid it upon a pile of brushwood. Then we went into the laboratory and put an end to all we found living there.

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WHEN this was accomplished, and we had washed and eaten, Montgomery and I went into my little room and seriously discussed our position for the first time. It was then near midnight. He was almost sober, but greatly disturbed in his mind. He had been strangely under the influence of Moreau's personality: I do not think it had ever occurred to him that Moreau could die. This disaster was the sudden collapse of the habits that had become part of his nature in the ten or more monotonous years he had spent on the island. He talked vaguely, answered my questions crookedly, wandered into general questions.

"This silly ass of a world," he said; "what a muddle it all is! I haven't had any life. I wonder when it's going to begin. Sixteen years being bullied by nurses and schoolmasters at their own sweet will; five in London grinding hard at medicine, bad food, shabby lodgings, shabby clothes, shabby vice, a blunder—I didn't know any better—and hustled off to this beastly island. Ten years here! What's it all for, Prendick? Are we bubbles blown by a baby?"

It was hard to deal with such ravings. "The thing we have to think of now," said I, "is how to get away from this island."

"What's the good of getting away? I'm an outcast. Where am I to join on? It's all very well for *you,* Prendick. Poor old Moreau! We can't leave him here to have his bones picked. As it is— And besides, what will become of the decent part of the Beast Folk?"

"Well," said I, "that will do tomorrow. I've been thinking we might make that brushwood into a pyre and burn his body—and those other things. Then what will happen with the Beast Folk?"

"I don't know. I suppose those that were made of beasts of prey will make silly asses of themselves sooner or later. We can't massacre the lot—can we? I suppose that's what *your* humanity would suggest? But they'll change. They are sure to change."

He talked thus inconclusively until at last I felt my temper going.

"Damnation!" he exclaimed at some petulance of mine; "can't you see I'm in a worse hole than you are?" And he got up, and went for the brandy. "Drink!" he said returning, "you logic-chopping, chalky-faced saint of an atheist, drink!"

"Not I," said I, and sat grimly watching his face under the yellow paraffine flare, as he drank himself into a garrulous misery.

I have a memory of infinite tedium. He wandered into a maudlin defense of the Beast People and of M'ling. M'ling, he said, was the only thing that had ever really cared for him. And suddenly an idea came to him.

"I'm damned!" said he, staggering to his feet and clutching the brandy bottle.

By some flash of intuition I knew what it was he intended. "You don't give drink to that beast!" I said, rising and facing him.

"Beast!" said he. "You're the beast. He takes his liquor like a Christian. Come out of the way, Prendick!"

"For God's sake," said I.

"*Get*—out of the way!" he roared, and suddenly whipped out his revolver.

"Very well," said I, and stood aside, half-minded to fall upon him as he put his hand upon the latch, but deterred by the thought of my useless arm.

"You've made a beast of yourself—to the beasts you may go."

He flung the doorway open, and stood half facing me between the yellow lamplight and the pallid glare of the moon; his eye-sockets were blotches of black under his stubby eyebrows.

"You're a solemn prig, Prendick, a silly ass! You're always fearing and fancying. We're on the edge of things. I'm bound to cut my throat tomorrow. I'm going to have a damned Bank Holiday tonight." He turned and went out into the moonlight. "M'ling!" he cried; "M'ling ,old friend!"

Three dim creatures in the silvery light came along the edge of the wan beach—one a white-wrapped creature, the other two blotches of blackness following it. They halted, staring. Then I saw M'ling's hunched shoulders as he came round the corner of the house.

"Drink!" cried Montgomery, "drink, you brutes! Drink and be men! Damme, I'm the cleverest. Moreau forgot this; this is the last touch. Drink, I tell you!" And waving the bottle in his hand he started off at a kind of quick trot to the westward, M'ling ranging himself between him and the three dim creatures who followed.

I went to the doorway. They were already indistinct in the mist of the moonlight before Montgomery halted. I saw him administer a dose of the raw brandy to M'ling, and saw the five figures melt into one vague patch.

"Sing!" I heard Montgomery shout—"sing all together, 'Confound old Prendick!' That's right; now again, 'Confound old Prendick!' "

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The black group broke up into five separate figures, and wound slowly away from me along the band of shining beach. Each went howling at his own sweet will, yelping insults at me, or giving whatever other vent this new inspiration of brandy demanded. Presently I heard Montgomery's voice shouting, "Right turn!" and they passed with their shouts and howls into the blackness of the landward trees. Slowly, very slowly, they receded into silence.

My thoughts went back to my means of escape. I got up, brought the lamp, and went into a shed to look at some kegs I had seen there. Then I became interested in the contents of some biscuit-tins, and opened one. I saw something out of the tail of my eye—and turned sharply.

Behind me lay the yard, vividly black-and-white in the moonlight, and the pile of wood and faggots on which Moreau and his mutilated victims lay, one over another. They seemed to be gripping one another in one last revengeful grapple. His wounds gaped, black as night, and the blood that had dripped lay in black patches upon the sand. Then I saw, without understanding, the cause of my phantom—a ruddy glow that came and danced and went upon the wall opposite. I misinterpreted this, fancied it was a reflection of my flickering lamp, and turned again to the stores in the shed. I went on rummaging among them, as well as a one-armed man could, finding this convenient thing and that, and putting them aside for tomorrow's launch.

My movements were slow, and the time passed quickly. Insensibly the daylight crept upon me.

The chanting died down, giving place to a clamor; then it began again, and suddenly broke into a tumult. I heard cries of, "More! more!" a sound like quarreling, and a sudden wild shriek. The quality of the sounds changed so greatly that it arrested my attention. I went out into the yard and listened. Then cutting like a knife across the confusion came the crack of a revolver.

I rushed at once through my room to the little doorway. As I did so I heard some of the packing cases behind me go sliding down and smash together on the floor of the shed. But I did not heed these. I flung the door open and looked out.

Up the beach by the boathouse a bonfire was burning, raining up sparks into the indistinctness of the dawn. Around this struggled a mass of black figures. I heard Montgomery call my name. I began to run at once towards this fire, revolver in hand. I saw the pink tongue of Montgomery's pistol lick out once, close to the ground. He was down. I shouted with all my strength and fired into the air. I heard some one cry, "The Master!" The knotted black struggle broke into scattering units, the fire leaped and sank down. The crowd of Beast People fled in sudden panic before me, up the beach. In my excitement I fired at their retreating backs as they disappeared among the bushes. Then I turned to the black heaps upon the ground.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

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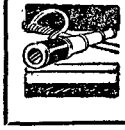

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MONTGOMERY lay on his back, with the hairy-gray Beast-man sprawling across his body. The brute was dead, but still gripping Montgomery's throat with its curving claws. Near by lay M'ling on his face and quite still, his neck bitten open and the upper part of the smashed brandy-bottle in his hand. Two other figures lay near the fire—the one motionless, the other groaning fitfully, every now and then raising its head slowly, then dropping it again.

I caught hold of the gray man and pulled him off Montgomery's body; his claws drew down the torn coat reluctantly as I dragged him away. Montgomery was dark in the face and scarcely breathing. I splashed sea-water on his face and pillowed his head on my rolled-up coat. M'ling was dead. The wounded creature by the fire—it was a Wolf-brute with a bearded gray face—lay, I found, with the fore part of its body upon the still glowing timber. The wretched thing was injured so dreadfully that in mercy I blew its brains out at once. The other brute was one of the Bull-men swathed in white. He too was dead. The rest of the Beast People had vanished from the beach.

I went to Montgomery again and knelt beside him, cursing my ignorance of medicine. The fire beside me had sunk down, and only charred beams of timber glowing at the central ends and mixed with a gray ash of brushwood remained. I wondered casually where Montgomery had got his wood. Then I saw that the dawn was upon us. The sky had grown brighter, the setting moon was becoming pale and opaque in the luminous blue of the day. The sky to the eastward was rimmed with red.

Suddenly I heard a thud and a hissing behind me, and, looking round, sprang to my feet with a cry of horror. Against the warm dawn great tumultuous masses of black smoke were boiling up out of the enclosure, and through their stony darkness shot flickering threads of blood-red flame. Then the thatched roof caught. I saw the curving charge of the flames across the sloping straw. A spurt of fire jetted from the window of my room.

I knew at once what had happened. I remembered the crash I had heard. When I had rushed out to Montgomery's assistance, I had overturned the lamp.

The hopelessness of saving any of the contents of the enclosure stared me in the face. My mind came back to my plan of flight, and turning swiftly I looked to see where the two boats lay upon the beach. They were gone! Two axes lay upon the sands beside me; chips and splinters were scattered broadcast, and the ashes of the bonfire were blackening and smoking under the dawn. Montgomery had burned the boats to revenge himself upon me and prevent our return to mankind!

A sudden convulsion of rage shook me. I was almost moved to batter his foolish head in, as he lay there helpless at my feet. Then suddenly his hand moved, so feebly, so pitifully, that my wrath vanished. He groaned, and opened his eyes for a minute. I knelt down beside him and raised his head. He opened his eyes again, staring silently at the dawn, and then they met mine. The lids fell.

"Sorry," he said presently, with an effort. He seemed trying to think. "The last," he murmured, "the last of this silly universe. What a mess—"

I listened. His head fell helplessly to one side. I thought some drink might revive him; but there was neither drink nor vessel in which to bring drink at hand. He seemed suddenly heavier. My heart went cold. I bent down to his face, put my hand through the rent in his blouse. He was dead; and even as he died a line of white heat, the limb of the sun, rose eastward beyond the projection of the bay, splashing its radiance across the sky and turning the dark sea into a weltering tumult of dazzling light. It fell like a glory upon his death-shrunken face.

I let his head fall gently upon the rough pillow I had made for him, and stood up. Before me was the glittering desolation of the sea, the awful solitude upon which I had already suffered so much; behind me the island, hushed under the dawn, its Beast People silent and unseen. The enclosure, with all its provisions and ammunition, burned noisily, with sudden gusts of flame, a fitful crackling, and now and then a crash. The heavy smoke drove up the beach away from me, rolling low over the distant tree-tops towards the huts in the ravine. Beside me were the charred vestiges of the boats and these four dead bodies.

Then out of the bushes came three Beast People, with hunched shoulders, protruding heads, misshapen hands awkwardly held, and inquisitive, unfriendly eyes, and advanced towards me.

I FACED these people, facing my fate in them, single-handed now—literally single-handed, for I had a broken arm. In

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my pocket was a revolver with two empty chambers. Among the chips scattered about the beach lay the two axes that had been used to chop up the boats. The tide was creeping in behind me. There was nothing for it but courage. I looked squarely into the faces of the advancing monsters. They avoided my eyes, and their quivering nostrils investigated the bodies that lay beyond me on the beach. I took half-a-dozen steps, picked up the blood-stained whip that lay beneath the body of the Wolf-man, and cracked it. They stopped and stared at me.

"Salute!" said I. "Bow down!"

They hesitated. One bent his knees. I repeated my command, with my heart in my mouth, and advanced upon them. One knelt, then the other two.

I turned and walked towards the dead bodies, keeping my face towards the three kneeling Beast Men, very much as an actor passing up the stage faces the audience.

"They broke the Law," said I, putting my foot on the Sayer of the Law. "They have been slain—even the Sayer of the Law; even the Other with the Whip. Great is the Law! Come and see."

"None escape," said I. "Therefore hear and do as I command." They stood up, looking questioningly at one another.

"Stand there," said I.

I picked up the hatchets and swung them by their heads from the sling of my arm; turned Montgomery over; picked up his revolver still loaded in two chambers, and bending down to rummage, found half-a-dozen cartridges in his pocket.

"Take him," said I, standing up again and pointing with the whip; "take him, and carry him out and cast him into the sea."

They came forward, evidently still afraid of Montgomery, but still more afraid of my cracking red whip-lash; and after some fumbling and hesitation, some whip-cracking and shouting, they lifted him gingerly, carried him down to the beach, and went splashing into the dazzling welter of the sea.

"On!" said I, "on! Carry him far."

They went in up to their armpits and stood regarding me.

"Let go," said I; and the body of Montgomery vanished with a splash.

Something seemed to tighten across my chest.

"Good!" said I, with a break in my voice; and they came back, hurrying and fearful, to the margin of the water, leaving long wakes of black in the silver. At the water's edge they stopped, turning and glaring into the sea as though they presently expected Montgomery to arise therefrom and exact vengeance.

"Now these," said I, pointing to the other bodies.

They took care not to approach the place where they had thrown Montgomery into the water, but instead, carried the four dead Beast People slantingly along the beach for perhaps a hundred yards before they waded out and cast them away.

As I watched them disposing of the mangled remains of M'ling, I heard a light footfall behind me, and turning quickly saw the big Hyena-swine perhaps a dozen yards away. His head was bent down, his bright eyes were fixed upon me, his stumpy hands clenched and held close by his side. He stopped in this crouching attitude when I turned, his eyes a little averted.

For a moment we stood eye to eye. I dropped the whip and snatched at the pistol in my pocket; for I meant to kill this brute, the most formidable of any left now upon the island, at the first excuse. It may seem treacherous, but so I was resolved. I was far more afraid of him than of any other two of the Beast Folk. His continued life was I knew a threat against mine.

I was perhaps a dozen seconds collecting myself. Then cried I, "Salute! Bow down!"

His teeth flashed upon me in a snarl. "Who are *you* that I should—"

Perhaps a little too spasmodically I drew my revolver, aimed quickly and fired. I heard him yelp, saw him run sideways and turn, knew I had missed, and clicked back the cock with my thumb for the next shot. But he was already running headlong, jumping from side to side, and I dared not risk another miss. Every now and then he looked back at me over his shoulder. He went slanting along the beach, and vanished beneath the driving masses of dense smoke that were still pouring out from the burning enclosure. For some time I stood staring after him. I turned to my three obedient Beast Folk again and signaled them to drop the body they still carried. Then I went back to the place by the fire where the bodies had fallen, and kicked the sand until all the brown blood-stains were absorbed and hidden.

I dismissed my three serfs with a wave of the hand. I carried my pistol in my hand, my whip thrust with the hatchets in the sling of my arm. I sat down to think, my back to the sea and my face against any surprise, how I could live on against the

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hour of my rescue (if ever rescue came).

Moreau had said, "The stubborn beast-flesh grows day by day back again." Then I remembered the Hyena-swine. I felt sure that if I did not kill that brute, he would kill me. The Sayer of the Law was dead: worse luck. They knew now that we of the Whips could be killed even as they themselves were killed. Were they peering at me already out of the green masses of ferns and palms over yonder, watching until I came within their spring? I began walking along the beach, away from the enclosure.

Perhaps half a mile along the beach I became aware of one of my three Beast Folk advancing out of the landward bushes towards me. I was now so nervous with my own imaginings that I immediately drew my revolver. Even the propitiatory gestures of the creature failed to disarm me. He hesitated as he approached.

"Go away!" cried I.

There was something very suggestive of a dog in the cringing attitude of the creature. It retreated a little way, very like a dog being sent home, and stopped, looking at me imploringly with canine brown eyes.

"Go away," said I. "Do not come near me."

"May I not come near you?" it said.

"No; go away," I insisted, and snapped my whip. Then putting my whip in my teeth, I stooped for a stone, and with that threat drove the creature away.

So in solitude I came round by the ravine of the Beast People, and hiding among the weeds and reeds that separated this crevice from the sea I watched such of them as appeared, trying to judge from their gestures and appearance how the death of Moreau and Montgomery and the destruction of the House of Pain had affected them. I know now the folly of my cowardice. Had I kept my courage up to the level of the dawn, had I not allowed it to ebb away in solitary thought, I might have grasped the vacant scepter of Moreau and ruled over the Beast People. As it was I sank to the position of a mere leader among my fellows.

Towards noon certain of them came and squatted basking in the hot sand. The imperious voices of hunger and thirst prevailed over my dread. I came out of the bushes, and, revolver in hand, walked down towards these seated figures. One, a Wolf-woman, turned her head and stared at me, and then the others. None attempted to rise or salute me. I felt too faint and weary to insist, and I let the moment pass.

"I want food," said I, almost apologetically, and drawing near.

"There is food in the huts," said an Ox-boar-man drowsily, and looking away from me.

I passed them, and went down into the shadow and odors of the almost deserted ravine. In an empty hut I feasted on some specked and half-decayed fruit; and then after I had propped some branches and sticks about the opening, and placed myself with my face towards it and my hand upon my revolver, the exhaustion of the last thirty hours claimed its own, and I fell into a light slumber, hoping that the flimsy barricade I had erected would cause sufficient noise in its removal to save me from surprise.

CHAPTER VI

THE REVERSION OF THE BEAST FOLK

IN THIS way I became one among the Beast People in the Island of Doctor Moreau. When I awoke, it was dark about me. My arm ached in its bandages. I sat up, wondering at first where I might be. I heard coarse voices talking outside. Then I saw that my barricade had gone, and that the opening of the hut stood clear. My revolver was still in my hand.

I heard something breathing, saw something crouched together close beside me. I held my breath, trying to see what it was. It began to move slowly, interminably. Then something soft and warm and moist passed across my hand. All my muscles contracted. I snatched my hand away. A cry of alarm began and was stifled in my throat. Then I just realized what had happened sufficiently to stay my fingers on the revolver.

"Who is that?" I said in a hoarse whisper, the revolver still pointed.

"I—Master."

"Who are *you?*"

"They say there is no Master now. But I know, I know. I carried the bodies into the sea, O Walker in the Sea! the bodies of those you slew. I'm your slave, Master."

"Are you the one I met on the beach?" I asked.

"The same, Master."

The Thing was evidently faithful enough, for it might have fallen upon me as I slept. "It is well," I said, extending my hand for another licking kiss. I began to realize what its presence meant, and the tide of my courage flowed. "Where are the others?" I asked.

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"They are mad; they are fools," said the Dog-man. "Even now they talk together beyond there. They say, 'The Master is dead. The Other with the Whip is dead. That other who had walked in the Sea is as we are. We have no Master, no Whips, no House of Pain, any more. There is an end. We love the Law, and will keep it; but there is no Pain, no Master, no Whips for ever again.' So they say. But I know, Master, I know."

I felt in the darkness, and patted the Dog-man's head. "It is well," I said again.

"Presently you will slay them all," said the Dog-man.

"Presently," I answered, "I will slay them all—after certain days and certain things have come to pass. Every one of them save those you spare, every one of them shall be slain."

"What the Master wishes to kill, the Master kills," said the Dog-man with a certain satisfaction in his voice.

"And that their sins may grow," I said, "let them live in their folly until their time is ripe. Let them not know that I am the Master."

"The Master's will is sweet," said the Dog-man, with the ready tact of his canine blood.

"But one has sinned," said I. "Him I will kill, whenever I may meet him. When I say to you, 'That is he,' see that you fall upon him. And now I will go to the men and women who are assembled together."

For a moment the opening of the hut was blackened by the exit of the Dog-man. Then I followed and stood up, almost in the exact spot where I had been when I heard Moreau and his staghound pursuing me. But now it was night, and all the miasmatic ravine about me was black; and beyond, instead of a green, sunlit slope, I saw a red fire, before which hunched, grotesque figures moved to and fro. Farther were the thick trees, a bank of darkness, fringed above with the black lace of the upper branches. The moon was just riding up on the edge of the ravine, and like a bar across its face drove the spire of vapor that was for ever streaming from the fumaroles of the island.

"Walk by me," said I, nerving myself; and side by side we walked down the narrow way, taking little heed of the dim Things that peered furtively at us out of the huts.

None about the fire attempted to salute me. Most of them disregarded me, ostentatiously. I looked round for the Hyena-swine, but he was not there. Altogether, perhaps twenty of the Beast Folk squatted, staring into the fire or talking to one another.

"He is dead, he is dead! The Master is dead!" said the voice of the Ape-man to the right of me. "The House of Pain—there *is* no House of Pain!"

"He is not dead," said I, in a loud voice. "Even now he watches us!"

This startled them. Twenty pairs of eyes regarded me.

"The House of Pain is gone," said I. "It will come again. The Master you cannot see; yet even now he listens among you."

"True, true!" said the Dog-man.

They were staggered at my assurance. An animal may be ferocious and cunning enough, but it takes a real man to tell a lie.

"The Man with the Bandaged Arm speaks a strange thing," said one of the Beast Folk.

"I tell you it is so," I said. "The Master and the House of Pain will come again. Woe be to him who breaks the Law!"

They looked curiously at one another. With an affectation of indifference I began to chop idly at the ground in front of me with my hatchet. They looked, I noticed, at the deep cuts I made in the turf.

Every moment I began to feel more convinced of my present security. In the course of about an hour I had really convinced several of the Beast Folk of the truth of my assertions, and talked most of the others into a dubious state. I kept a sharp eye for my enemy the Hyena-swine, but he never appeared. Then as the moon crept down from the zenith, one by one the listeners began to yawn (showing the oddest teeth in the light of the sinking fire), and first one and then another retired towards the dens in the ravine; and I, dreading the silence and darkness, went with them, knowing I was safer with several of them than with one alone.

IN THIS manner began the longer part of my sojourn upon this Island of Doctor Moreau. But from that night until the end came, there was but one thing happened to tell save a series of innumerable small unpleasant details and the fretting of an incessant uneasiness. So that I prefer to make no chronicle for that gap of time, to tell only one cardinal incident of the ten months I spent as an intimate of these half-humanized brutes. There is much that sticks in my memory that I could write—things that I would cheerfully give my right hand to forget; but they do not help the telling of the story.

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In the retrospect it is strange to remember how soon I fell in with these monsters' ways, and gained my confidence again. I had my quarrels with them of course, and could show some of their teeth-marks still; but they soon gained a wholesome respect for my trick of throwing stones and for the bite of my hatchet. And my Saint-Bernard-man's loyalty was of infinite service to me. I found their simple scale of honor was based mainly on the capacity for inflicting trenchant wounds. Indeed, I may say—without vanity, I hope—that I held something like preeminence among them. One or two, whom in a rare access of high spirits I had scarred rather badly, bore me a grudge; but it vented itself chiefly behind my back, and at a safe distance from my missiles, in grimaces.

The Hyena-swine avoided me, and I was always on the alert for him. My inseparable Dog-man hated and dreaded him intensely. I really believe that was at the root of the brute's attachment to me. It was soon evident to me that the former monster had tasted blood, and gone the way of the Leopard-man. He formed a lair somewhere in the forest, and became solitary. Once I tried to induce the Beast Folk to hunt him, but I lacked the authority to make them cooperate for one end. Again and again I tried to approach his den and come upon him unawares; but always he was too acute for me, and saw or winded me and got away. He too made every forest pathway dangerous to me and my ally with his lurking ambuscades. The Dog-man scarcely dared to leave my side.

In the first month or so the Beast Folk, compared with their latter condition, were human enough, and for one or two besides my canine friend I even conceived a friendly tolerance. The little pink sloth-creature displayed an odd affection for me, and took to following me about. The Monkey-man bored me, however; he assumed, on the strength of his five digits, that he was my equal, and was for ever jabbering at me—jabbering the most arrant nonsense.

One thing about him entertained me a little: he had a fantastic trick of coining new words. He had an idea, I believe, that to gabble about names that meant nothing was the proper use of speech. He called it "Big Thinks" to distinguish it from "Little Thinks," the sane every-day interests of life. If ever I made a remark he did not understand, he would praise it very much, ask me to say it again, learn it by heart, and go off repeating it, with a word wrong here or there, to all the milder of the Beast People. He thought nothing of what was plain and comprehensible. I invented some very curious "Big Thinks" for his especial use. I think now that he was the silliest creature I ever met; he had developed in the most wonderful way the distinctive silliness of man without losing one jot of the natural folly of a monkey.

This, I say, was in the earlier weeks of my solitude among these brutes. During that time they respected the usage established by the Law, and behaved with general decorum. Once I found another rabbit torn to pieces—by the Hyena-swine, I am assured—but that was all. It was about May when I first distinctly perceived a growing difference in their speech and carriage, a growing coarseness of articulation, a growing disinclinaton to talk. My Monkey-man's jabber multiplied in volume, but grew less and less comprehensible, more and more simian. Some of the others seemed altogether slipping their hold upon speech, though they still understood what I said to them at that time. (Can you imagine language, once clear-cut and exact, softening and guttering, losing shape and import, becoming mere limps of sound again?)

And they walked erect with an increasing difficulty. Though they evidently felt ashamed of themselves, every now and then I would come upon one or another running on toes and finger-tips, and quite unable to recover the vertical attitude They held things more clumsily; drinking by suction, feeding by gnawing, grew commoner every day. I realized more keenly than ever what Moreau had told me about the "stubborn beast-flesh." They were reverting, and reverting very rapidly.

My Dog-man imperceptibly slipped back to the dog again; day by day he became dumb, quadrupedal, hairy. I scarcely noticed the transition from the companion on my right hand to the lurching dog at my side.

As the carelessness and disorganization increased from day to day, the lane of dwelling-places, at no time very sweet, became so loathsome that I left it, and going across the island made myself a hovel of boughs amid the black ruins of Moreau's enclosure. Some memory of pain, I found, still made that place the safest from the Beast Folk.

It would be impossible to detail every step of the lapsing of these monsters—to tell how, day by day, the human semblance left them; how their foreheads fell away

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and their faces projected; how the quasi-human intimacy I had permitted myself with some of them in the first month of my loneliness became a shuddering horror to recall.

THE change was slow and inevitable. For them and for me it came without any definite shock. I still went among them in safety, because no jolt in the downward glide had released the increasing charge of explosive animalism that ousted the human day by day. But I began to fear that soon now that shock must come. My Saint-Bernard-brute followed me to the enclosure every night, and his vigilance enabled me to sleep at times in something like peace. The little pink-sloth-thing became shy and left me, to crawl back to its natural life once more among the tree-branches. We were in just the state of equilibrium that would remain in one of those "Happy Family" cages which animal-tamers exhibit, if the tamer were to leave it for ever.

Of course these creatures did not decline into such beasts as the reader has seen in zoological gardens—into ordinary bears, wolves, tigers, oxen, swine, and apes. There was still something strange about each; in each Moreau had blended this animal with that. One perhaps was ursine chiefly, another feline chiefly; another bovine chiefly; but each was tainted with other creatures—a kind of generalized animalism appearing through the specific dispositions. And the dwindling shreds of the humanity still startled me every now and then—a momentary recrudescence of speech perhaps, an unexpected dexterity of the fore-feet, a pitiful attempt to walk erect.

I too must have undergone strange changes. My clothes hung about me as yellow rags, through whose rents showed the tanned skin. My hair grew long, and became matted together. I am told that even now my eyes have a strange brightness, a swift alertness of movement.

I did not, however, mean to die, and an incident occurred that warned me unmistakably of the folly of letting the days pass so—for each fresh day was fraught with increasing danger from the Beast People.

I was lying in the shade of the enclosure wall, staring out to sea in hopes of seeing a sail, when I was startled by something cold touching the skin of my heel, and starting round found the little pink sloth-creature blinking into my face. He had long since lost speech and active movement, and the lank hair of the little brute grew thicker every day and his stumpy claws more askew. He made a moaning noise when he saw he had attracted my attention, went a little way towards the bushes and looked back at me.

At first I did not understand, but presently it occurred to me that he wished me to follow him; and this I did at last—slowly, for the day was hot. When we reached the trees he clambered into them, for he could travel better among their swinging creepers than on the ground. And suddenly in a trampled space I came upon a ghastly group. My Saint-Bernard-creature lay on the ground, dead; and near his body crouched the Hyena-swine, gripping the quivering flesh with its misshapen claws, gnawing at it, and snarling with delight. As I approached, the monster lifted its glaring eyes to mine, its lips went trembling back from its red-stained teeth, and it growled menacingly. It was not afraid and not ashamed; the last vestige of the human taint had vanished. I advanced a step farther, stopped, and pulled out my revolver. At last I had him face to face.

The brute made no sign of retreat; but its ears went back, its hair bristled, and its body crouched together. I aimed between the eyes and fired. As I did so, the Thing rose straight at me in a leap, and I was knocked over like a ninepin. It clutched at me with its crippled hand, and struck me in the face. Its spring carried it over me. I fell under the hind part of its body; but luckily I had hit as I meant, and it had died even as it leaped. I crawled out from under its unclean weight and stood up trembling, staring at its quivering body. That danger at least was over; but this, I knew, was only the first of the series of relapses that must come.

I BURNT both of the bodies on a pyre of brushwood; but after that I saw that unless I left the island my death was only a question of time. The Beast People by that time had, with one or two exceptions, left the ravine and made themselves lairs according to their taste among the thickets of the island. Few prowled by day, most of them slept, and the island might have seemed deserted to a newcomer; but at night the air was hideous with their calls and howling. I had half a mind to make a massacre of them; to build traps, or fight them with my knife.

Had I possessed sufficient cartridges, I should not have hesitated to begin the killing. There could now be scarcely a score

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left of the dangerous carnivores; the braver of these were already dead. After the death of this poor dog of mine, my last friend, I too adopted to some extent the practice of slumbering in the daytime in order to be on my guard at night. I rebuilt my den in the walls of the enclosure, with such a narrow opening that anything attempting to enter must necessarily make a considerable noise. The creatures had lost the art of fire too, and recovered their fear of it. I turned almost passionately now to hammering together stakes and branches to form a raft for my escape.

I found a thousand difficulties. I am an extremely unhandy man; but most of the requirements of a raft I met at last in some clumsy, circuitous way or other, and this time I took care of the strength. The only insurmountable obstacle was that I had no vessel to contain the water I should need if I floated forth upon these untraveled seas. I would have even tried pottery, but the island contained no clay. I used to go moping about the island, trying with all my might to solve this one last difficulty. Sometimes I would give way to wild outbursts of rage, and hack and splinter some unlucky tree in my intolerable vexation. But I could think of nothing.

And then came a day, a wonderful day, which I spent in ecstasy. I saw a sail to the southwest, a small sail like that of a little schooner; and forthwith I lit a great pile of brushwood, and stood by it in the heat of it, and the heat of the midday sun, watching. All day I watched that sail, eating or drinking nothing. In the dawn the sail was nearer, and I saw it was the dirty lug-sail of a small boat. But it sailed strangely. Two men were in the boat, sitting low down—one by the bows, the other at the rudder. The head was not kept to the wind; it yawed and fell away.

As the day grew brighter, I began waving the last rag of my jacket to them; but they did not notice me, and sat still, facing each other.

Slowly, slowly, the boat drove past towards the west. I would have swum out to it, but something—a cold, vague fear—kept me back. In the afternoon the tide stranded the boat, and left it a hundred yards or so to the westward of the ruins of the enclosure. The men in it were dead, had been dead so long that they fell to pieces when I tilted the boat on its side and dragged them out. One had a shock of red hair, like the captain of the *Ipecacuanha,* and a dirty white cap lay in the bottom of the boat.

As I stood beside the boat, three of the Beasts came slinking out of the bushes and sniffing towards me. One of my spasms of disgust came upon me. I thrust the little boat down the beach and clambered on board her. Two of the brutes were Wolf-beasts, and came forward with quivering nostrils and glittering eyes; the third was the horrible nondescript of bear and bull. When I saw them approaching those wretched remains, heard them snarling at one another and caught the gleam of their teeth, a frantic horror succeeded my repulsion. I turned my back upon them, struck the lug and began paddling out to sea. I could not bring myself to look behind me.

I lay, however, between the reef and the island that night, and the next morning went around to the stream and filled the empty keg aboard with water. Then, with such patience as I could command, I collected a quantity of fruit, and waylaid and killed two rabbits with my last three cartridges. While I was doing this I left the boat moored to an inward projection of the reef, for fear of the Beast People.

IN THE evening I started, and drove out to sea before a gentle wind from the southwest, slowly, steadily; and the island grew smaller and smaller, and the lank spire of smoke dwindled to a finer and finer line against the hot sunset. The ocean rose up around me, hiding that low, dark patch from my eyes. The daylight, the trailing glory of the sun, went streaming out of the sky, was drawn aside like some luminous curtain, and at last I looked into the blue gulf of immensity which the sunshine hides, and saw the floating hosts of the stars. The sea was silent, the sky was silent. I was alone with the night and silence.

So I drifted for three days, eating and drinking sparingly, and meditating upon all that had happened to me—not desiring very greatly then to see men again. One unclean rag was about me, my hair a black tangle: no doubt my discoverers thought me a madman.

It is strange, but I felt no desire to return to mankind. I was only glad to be quit of the foulness of the Beast People. And on the third day I was picked up by a brig from Apia to San Francisco. Neither the captain nor the mate would believe my story, judging that solitude and danger had made me mad; and fearing their opinion might be that of others, I refrained from telling my adventure further, and

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professed to recall nothing that had happened to me between the loss of the *Lady Vain* and the time when I was picked up again—the space of a year.

I had to act with the utmost circumspection to save myself from the suspicion of insanity. My memory of the Law, of the two dead sailors, of the ambuscades of the darkness, of the body in the canebrake, haunted me; and, unnatural as it seems, with my return to mankind came, instead of that confidence and sympathy I had expected, a strange enhancement of the uncertainty and dread I had experienced during my stay upon the island. No one would believe me; I was almost as queer to men as I had been to the Beast People. I may have caught something of the natural wildness of my companions. They say that terror is a disease, and anyhow I can witness that for several years now a restless fear has dwelt in my mind—such a restless fear as a half-tamed lion cub may feel.

My trouble took the strangest form. I could not persuade myself that the men and women I met were not also another Beast People, animals half wrought into the outward image of human souls, and that they would not soon begin to revert—to show first this bestial mark and then that.

But I have confided my case to a strangely able man—a man who had known Moreau, and seemed half to credit my story; a mental specialist—and he has helped me mightily, though I do not expect that the terror of that island will ever altogether leave me.

At most times it lies far in the back of my mind, a mere distant cloud, a memory, and a faint distrust; but there are times when the little cloud spreads until it obscures the whole sky. Then I look about me at my fellow-men; and I go in fear. I see faces, keen and bright; others, dull or dangerous: others, unsteady, insincere—none that have the calm authority of a reasonable soul.

I feel as though the animal was surging up through them; that presently the degradation of the Islanders will be played over again on a larger scale. I know this is an illusion; that these seeming men and women about me are indeed men and women—men and women for ever, perfectly reasonable creatures, full of human desires and tender solicitude, emancipated from instinct and the slaves of no fantastic Law—being altogether different from the Beast Folk. Yet I shrink from them, from their curious glances, their inquiries and assistance, and long to be away from them and alone. For that reason I live near the broad free downland, and can escape thither when this shadow is over my soul; and very sweet is the empty downland then, clean under the wind-swept sky.

When I lived in London the horror was wellnigh insupportable. I could not get away from men: their voices came through windows; locked doors were flimsy safeguards.

I would go out into the streets to fight with my delusion, craving men glance jealously at me; weary, pale workers go coughing by me with tired eyes and eager paces, like wounded deer dripping blood; old people, bent and dull, pass murmuring to themselves; and, all unheeding, a ragged tail of gibing children.

Then I would turn aside into some chapel—and even there, such was my disturbance, it seemed that the preacher gibbered "Big Thinks," even as the Ape-man had done; or into some library, and there the intent faces over the books seemed but patient creatures waiting for prey. Particularly nauseous were the blank, expressionless faces of people in trains and omnibuses; they seemed no more my fellow-creatures than dead bodies would be, so that I did not dare to travel unless I was assured of being alone. And even it seemed that I too was not a reasonable creature, but only an animal tormented with some strange disorder in its brain which sent it to wander alone, like a sheep stricken with gid.

This is a mood, however, that comes to me now, I thank God, more rarely. I have withdrawn myself from the confusion of cities and multitudes, and spend my days surrounded by wise books—bright windows in this life of ours, lit by the shining souls of men. I see few strangers, and have but a small household. My days I devote to reading and to experiments in chemistry, and I spend many of the clear nights in the study of astronomy. There is—though I do not know how there is or why there is—a sense of infinite peace and protection in the glittering hosts of heaven. There it must be, I think, in the vast and eternal laws of matter, and not in the daily cares and sins and troubles of men, that whatever is more than animal within us must find its solace and its hope. I *hope*, or I could not live.

And so, in hope and solitude, my story ends.

EDWARD PRENDICK

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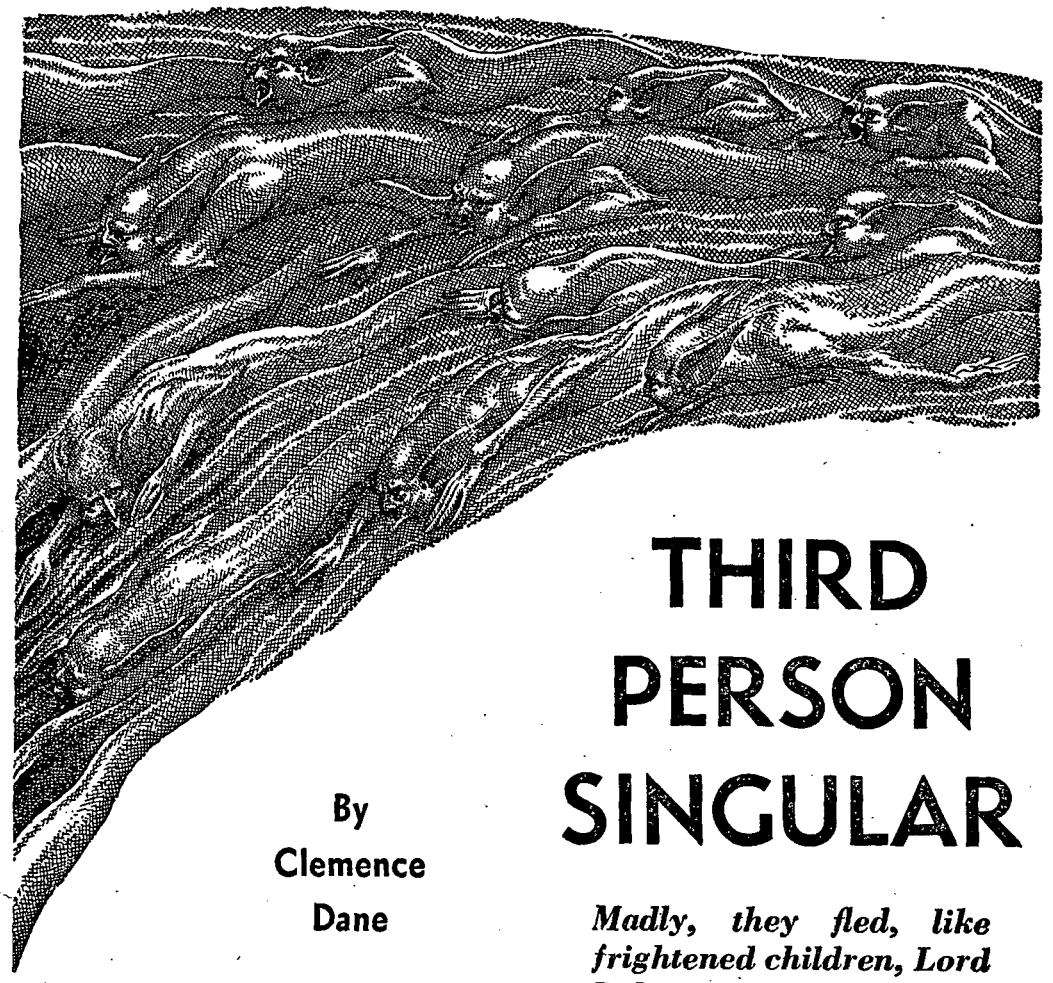

THIRD PERSON SINGULAR

By Clemence Dane

Madly, they fled, like frightened children, Lord Babyon and his lady, from an avenging ghost, all oblivious that their enemy rode with them, content—to wait. . . .

CHAPTER I

AS HE walked along the Pantiles with the spring wind meeting his cheek, the chatter of passers-by and the music of the band meeting his ears, he thought to himself that he was well out of the business. Ouf! the pleasure of fresh air after the heat and half-light of his cousin's room, after the heat and half-light of his cousin's emotion! He was well, well out of it!

Yet through, behind, upon the glittering spectacle of society taking the air and the waters, floating between his eyes and the women's draperies, faces, fans, twinkling high lights on incessantly rustling foliage, sliding clouds up aloft, shadows that ran and paused and shifted like hot blue ghosts in and out among the living shapes, he could still see the room he had quitted ten minutes ago. The three walls of it were still as much before his eyes as if he were sitting in his private box at Covent Garden, as if the memory of the stifling, scorching little scene through which he had passed were an operetta played and sung before him. He could still hear the dark feminine voice, Hariot's voice.

It was odd how one heard Hariot, felt Hariot, never saw Hariot, when it came to

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looking back into the memory. Heat raying out of half darkness—that was Hariot: heat borne on a voice like the viola in the orchestra at Covent Garden. He had told her so that day—"Your voice—it's like a viola, Cousin!" and the viola voice had answered out of the billows of mulberry silk, out of the blur of cheek caught in an ivory vise of supporting fist, had answered with a characteristic question—

"Is it your favourite instrument?"

What an escape! Thank the god (goddess, more likely) who looks after bachelors that he had heard for the last time that dark voice, had evaded for the last time the clutching questions of that greedy voice! Marriage with Cousin Hariot—marriage with the Maiden of Nuremberg!

He had seen, as one of the sights of the Grand Tour, such a marriage celebrated, had seen some luckless traitor delivered into the Maiden's arms. It had been explained to him how ingeniously the Maiden was constructed, with what fervour she pressed her mortal kisses upon a man's eyes and breast and brain. No chance for him once married to the Maiden—to Hariot the Maiden!

" 'Is it your favourite instrument?' Is it, that is to say, like me? I am your bride and therefore of all instruments it is your favourite, is it not, as I am your favourite, am I not? Of all women, the only woman for you, am I not?"

He made up his mind then and there, before that question's echo had ceased to ring in his mind, that he would not marry Hariot. Contract or no contract, heiress or no heiress, family pressure or no, he would not marry his Cousin Hariot. The delight of having, though only mentally, cut himself free of Hariot and the family, hastened his answer—

"No, Hariot!"

"No—Jamie?"

She made, with her possessive lingering on it, his very name her possession, and so he had said irritably, to be rid of her questioning—

"I prefer the harp. . . ." with no thought, upon honour, in his mind at the moment of Menella Traill.

"Menella must teach me then," said the dark voice to that: and so sent his eyes to the window, to the anxious piece of girlhood sitting by the window.

The sun shone in upon Menella Traill, turned her tendrils of hair into a saint's halo and rosily darkened her cheek, as if it were a branch of spring blossom raised against the sky. A glance, no more, he had given her and none had been returned him from beneath the dropped lids. Yet he had turned back to his cousin a dazzled young man, a young man in revolt.

Why was not Hariot Menella? How easy life would be if Cousin Hariot had been penniless Menella! He liked the way the muslin was folded about her shoulders and pouted over her breast. Hariot was always a restless rustle of silks: her eyes, so black and bright, were a question, a challenge; but muslin, blue ribbon, tendrils of fair hair, dropped lids and a sweet glance asleep behind them, that was Menella's way. And that was how a woman should look and be. There was nothing to be afraid of in Menella, though you might make her afraid easily and comfort her afterwards. Dear Menella! But Hariot—he would not own to himself that he was afraid of Hariot. Instead, he said to himself that he was not obliged to like her because she was his cousin. He was twenty-one, home from the Grand Tour, heir last month to nothing but his mother's settlements, heir to-day to an estate that set him free to marry whom he pleased.

If his officious elders had known that his two brothers would die unmarried within a week of each other they would have been less ready to betroth him at eighteen to mature Hariot. He had, he'd admit it, thought himself in love with Cousin Hariot at eighteen, but at twenty-one a man knew more of the world and his own heart. He would not marry her. The families might say and do anything they threatened; but he would not marry the woman who had all but bought him from his greedy parents.

Then her voice had recalled him.

"Shall I, Jamie?"

"Shall you what, Madam?"

"Learn the harp for you?"

"Madam. . . ."

"Hariot, Jamie!"

"There it is, Madam—well then, Hariot—Cousin Hariot. It's that we are cousins."

"What of it?"

"Cousins, Cousin Hariot! And you must know that I had a master, a doctor of medicine, a most learned man—I met him at Florence . . . ."

"Ah," she said. "It should have been Mantua." The tall Spanish leather screen shut off the light: he could not see her clearly; but it seemed to him that she was laughing.

"Mantua, Cousin?"

"Quacks have been common there, Jamie, since Romeo's day."

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"Quack? He was my friend. And in his view—for I told him of my—of our—that is to say, I made him acquainted with my affairs—I talked of you . . . ."

"To the apothecary?"

"He was physician to the Duke."

"And to Romeo. Continue, Romeo!"

He scowled at her.

"My name's Jamie. And I say, Cousin Hariot, that—that—that he bid me look about me. And I have. There's young Milchester, he was odd enough at school, and now he's kept to his rooms and thinks himself Caesar and plays with hobby-horses. Pitiful! And his sister—they had her in a strait-jacket before she was married: and though they call her in her senses you know yourself she's the talk of the town. And, do you see, their father and mother were—as we are, Hariot! And there's the horrid tale of the Duke's eldest—and—and the long and the short of it is, Cousin Hariot, that cousins should like each other as sisters and brothers do—shouldn't marry."

He had shot his bolt at last, and in the relief of having done it, waited with tolerable composure for the dusty commotion of its striking home. He even felt a certain curiosity, for he had never yet encountered his Cousin Hariot's wrath. She had been a stranger to him since their early childhood, save for the holiday month of their betrothal; but the family temper was legend. Well, now he had braved it and felt the better. Let her say what she pleased. She was only a woman, a mere plain Miss, seven years older than he, and his cousin. Let her rage!

But there was no noise. There was to be, it seemed, no unpleasantness. There had been the faintest rustle of silk, the slightest catch of breath in surprise or what you please, as she raised herself on her elbow on the daybed: and the red camellia she had been twirling in her free hand fell among the ashes of the hearth beside her, as she said in the rough husky tone of a viola string clumsily twanged—

"Menella!"

"Madam?"

"You may go out, Menella! You may go to tea with your sister, Menella! Go—do you hear me!"

HE WATCHED Menella vanish from the room like a candle flame ceasing in a swoop of tempest.

He wanted to go after her, to comfort apprehensive Menella.

"Now, Jamie!"

Her voice had stopped him on an actual movement of escape, and he faced her as she rose, raging with himself that he, for all his inner sense of grown manhood shaking off its minority, should still be outwardly afflicted by his schooldays' trick of stammer and blush.

"Now, Jamie!"

She had come directly to him, the dark creature, her two hands pressed to her temples as if she were holding her thoughts steady in her brain. Her glossy, pitch-black hair, dressed high as all women wore it, made her unseemly in his eyes. Her hair was beautiful, but so were Menella's tresses, more beautiful. For if you have to choose between day and night, day to any sane man is more beautiful. Yet even Menella dimmed her glory with powder, confined it with blue ribbons and tucked in a rose or two. Menella conformed. If Menella were walking now at his side between the trees and the colonnade, her little heels tapping on the smooth tiles, men would gaze and women would glance; but if Hariot were alongside, men would gaze and gape and follow, and the ladies would lift their eyebrows.

This unadorned Hariot was more like the Greek witch Medea that he had seen painted black on a red bowl, at Naples, than an English gentlewoman. See how she had walked towards him, hand at her brow, a femal Absalom straining against the bough's clutch! She was too wild for him. Moreover he resented her—"Now, Jamie!" No young woman should use such a tone to him, as if he were a schoolboy. He would show her!

"Now, Hariot!" he returned it: and his blue eyes took the glance of her black ones stoutly.

"But, Jamie, how are you treating me? What is it? What's amiss? What's all this talk of cousins? My dear, we are to be married in a month. My gown is half made. Cousins marry every day. Why, my dear, Grandmamma was born a Babyon, yet Sir Endymion married her—his own first cousin, as I am to you."

"That's it! My friend says. . . ."

She put out her hands to him, and when he would not see their appeal, caught at the lapels of his coat.

"Jamie! Look at me, Jamie! How unkind you are! Won't you look at me?"

He looked at her. The shining leaves of the camellia cracked and spat and twisted as a flame sprang up out of the ashes and licked the twig. A thin smoke spiralled upwards and drifted between them, confusing

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his sight. The acrid scent bothered him: her grip tightened.

"Jamie, if you think—dream—that any one, any man, any friend, can talk us into breaking our contract—do you think that?—you're much mistaken. I'm your wife: indeed I am. You can't be off with me now. It's too late. The settlements are signed. My money is yours. You could use it today: you could spend every guinea and I couldn't stop you. We're as good as married."

"I'm not—I won't—I can't—I'm not enough for you, Cousin Hariot. You're a great lady, don't you see? A duke, a lord—you ought to marry a great lord."

She pressed in on him.

"There's no ought. I could have—I should have—but I waited for you. I've thought of us as married. We *are* married. I've thought of you—"

A dark flame warmed her face. Ten years older and he had thought her a goddess; but at twenty she frightened him with her 'married'!

"Cousin Hariot—it's this—I esteem—I admire—but we are not suited. . . ."

She broke in.

"Jamie, I'm older than you. Six years. It's nothing, six years, and yet it'll be of use to you, Jamie! I can use my six years for you, when it comes to asking things, contriving things, in society, in the press of things. I'm wise. I can—steer, Jamie. You'll see! And I shall like to. That's why I waited for you. As you say—of course I could have married. I tell you I could have married at fifteen—seventeen—twenty. There were suitors enough. I let them go away again. I didn't want made men. I wanted some one to make. Jamie, I'll make you, I tell you! What do you want to do? What do you want to be? Chancellor? First Lord? Secretary of State?

"There's nothing you couldn't be with me to help you. I can make people do what I want though they don't want to. I made you want to kiss me. I made you hang on my doorstep for an hour waiting to escort me, didn't I, the second time we met? It was a family plan, a cradle plan, our marriage; yet you have me to thank, Jamie. I saved the fortune for you. My father would have broken with your guardian: he had a duke for me when I was twenty-two. But I wouldn't have it. I'd seen you by then. I said to myself—'He's the husband for me! There's a fate linking us. We aren't cousins for nothing. I'll take him. I'll make him what he pleases—make him a king if he pleases.'"

And then as he laughed uneasily she repeated with a vehemence that bewildered him—"I mean it, Jamie! I've so much money—mounds of gold! Jamie, do you understand what it means to own half a million pounds? It makes a queen of me and I'll make a king of you. They'd shut me up again: they'd call me mad, if I began to use my money now as I will use it one day—through you! Through you I shall have such power. Jamie, I mean what I say. I'll make you a king, an emperor. Look what Sarah Marlborough did and was! We'll do better than Sarah. We can do what we choose. I can buy you a corner of creation. I can do it, I tell you! I tell you—there's nothing in the world I can't do."

She stopped abruptly, putting her handkerchief to her lips. He could feel the convulsive shaking of her body and was repulsed, bewildered and suspicious. The phrase she had used rang in his ears—'They'd shut me up again.' He felt himself shrinking as he watched and listened, shrinking from her not as a woman but as a human being: and it seemed to him that he need not be ashamed of his fear of her, that there was maybe a reason for his renewing nervous fear of what she might, in her inexplicable woman's shamelessness, say or do next. He felt that no code of his knowledge would in any way restrain her free utterance and gesture.

HE WISHED he had not yielded to this impulse to tell her of his change of mind. He wished that he had made this bid for liberty any way but by word of mouth. But that would be to shirk. He wouldn't be a jilt: he would see that Hariot agreed with him before he left her. However wild she was in her speech he must wait and bear it and talk to her until she saw that he was right. She was fond of him, poor soul! That was the trouble. But was it for him to be angry with her on that score?

No, no! Indeed he wished he could be fond of her in return: indeed he did.

He wished most heartily that the boyish heartache of two years ago had lasted. But the family guardians, his and hers, had been too clever. They should have married him to her then, a newly caught and willing fish. If he had travelled with Hariot as he had wished to do, things might have been different. But no, they had been so clever with their talk of "Too soon," and "Majority." They had barely let him see her: a kiss or two: a family be-

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trothal feast: and then Hariot was hurried away on some unnecessary visit and he sent on his travels. For a year he had heard nothing: then indeed Hariot had begun to write to him: letters waited for him at Genoa, Padua, Cadiz, letters that, he felt, should have hurried him home, his first love-letters. But there were so many of them. At any rate when he came home he had hurried to Hariot to renew his courtship and had loved her as much as ever at their first meeting. But at the second meeting Menella Traill was there: she made Hariot seem old and strange, and a person to fear. Menella was frightened of Hariot, for he had caught her one day crying, and she had owned as much: and that fear, ridiculous as it was, had slipped from her lips into his heart as he comforted Menella. Yes, he had left her comforted, though he was not comforted himself. He should not have kissed her: that was disloyal to Hariot, and he knew it and Menella knew it.

Hariot had been kind enough to Menella. Menella was scarcely a lady, a country parson's daughter whom Hariot had seen in church and had fancied for a companion. Menella told him the tale. She had sistered Hariot for two years now, and it was plain to him, for all she said little, that she had not found it easy, though Hariot was kind to her and bought her pretty clothes and gave her her own cast-off clothes. Yes, Hariot had been sisterly and kind, and Menella shook and paled whenever Hariot spoke to her. Watching Menella's terror he had grown to share it: that is to say, he was not afraid as a girl might be, but he knew clearly as he watched the two girls that the family had been too clever. Fortune or no fortune, Hariot was not for him. They had sent him on his travels alone and now he had come back, you see, a man of the world, able to acknowledge that she was too old for him, too grand for him, too much for him altogether. But then he must tell her so: he must be honest and make an end of the business.

He smiled at her uneasily.

"Cousin, it's no use talking. I'm fond of you, of course. But, don't you see, marrying —that's another matter. We shouldn't like it, Cousin! We shouldn't be suited. I don't want to be a king or a great man or—or any nonsense. I'm Jamie Babyon of Babyon Court and that's enough for me. But it wouldn't be near enough for you, Hariot! You're so beautiful and rich and fine. You couldn't come otter-hunting with me, now could you, Cousin Hariot? Or know about the still-room and poachers' wives and the price of hay? But that's what I shall want to talk of, Cousin Hariot, and so—and so—cousins and all—and so I say, let's part friends and go our ways. You see, I don't want to be great."

Her motionless silence emboldened him.

"Come, Cousin! You know I'm in the right. Come now!"

He held out his hand to her, but she struck it down, panting. He took it as an excuse to turn on his heel and leave; but she cried "No, no!" to his movement, in such choking accents of revolt that unwillingly he stopped and waited while she struggled with herself for control of her speech. The puffs and spirals of smoke still twisting up from the burning laurel came at him, as it seemed, almost with intention, like the blind filaments of a living creature, attacking his sight and his judgment. He dispersed them with a movement, angrily, the more so because it seemed to him that she drew in the scent of the smoke with deep breaths, strengthening herself; for her eyes dilated and she spoke so loudly that his capacity to apprehend her meaning was dulled. He listened to the instrument and hardly comprehended the tune.

"Jamie, you're not going to leave me? You don't understand! You can't! Look at me, Jamie! Look at me, I say! Listen to me! I tell you this to warn you, because I can see things coming before they come. Stay with me! I'll let you do what you like with me. I'll be quiet and obedient. But if you leave me as you did two years ago—all the more because you leave me—I shall still be with you. I won't be put away and forsaken. One after another they came and went away again. I wasn't strong enough to keep them. But you—you shan't go. I'm strong enough to keep you. You're younger than I. You're only a boy still. You shall do as I say. That's because you are part of me, Jamie, because I married you with my soul. I'll go with you, I say! Yes, you'll carry me with you wherever you go. You shan't get away from me as you did two years ago. If you do, I'll do worse than I did then. I didn't know then that you were in league to cheat me, to keep me in one room, to take away my clothes and my money. That woman struck me, Jamie—again and again she struck me. I knew you'd given your orders; but I cheated you all. I didn't feel the blows because I was away. I was following you, Jamie! But I couldn't cross running water, so I came

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back. And they pretended to be glad and let me buy new clothes. Menella pretended to be glad, too, the little devil, when she'd been wearing my clothes, I tell you! O Jamie, Jamie, they were so cruel to me! They took away my body, Jamie, so that I shouldn't follow you. They took it away, I say! What could I do but scream for my body? To call that being mad, was that fair? They locked all the doors and there I was naked outside the doors of life: and I couldn't get to you across the sea. Souls can't cross water unless a body carries them. Jamie, you wouldn't do that to me: you wouldn't take away my body? You'll be kind to me: you'll understand: you'll lend me—anything. You and I will get married and be so happy, Jamie—my darling—my dear, dear Jamie!"

SHE was fawning on him: her arms were round him: he could scarcely breathe for the stricture of her arms about his neck. Her head was flung back to see him better: her lips were parted: her wild eyes full of tears. He was shocked and stirred beyond measure. He had a terrible sensation of helplessness: he had a vision of a giant drowning and crying for help as it drowned: and of himself as a dwarf safe ashore, watching in futility. The smoke eddied about them still, dilating and distorting the shape of his cousin's face. In a sort of anger he lifted his hands and pulled her hands apart because he didn't know what to do but free himself. What could a man do to this creature? She wasn't Menella. She was a black woman on a red ground, writhing round a vase, a sight he should have seen last year, on his tour, not now, home in safe sunny England. What was he to say to her? He considered and said—

"Cousin, you're ill. Sit down. I'll call your maid."

"Jamie, save my life!"

He said—

"I'll call your maid. I'll go."

"Jamie, I warn you. I'll go with you."

"Cousin, you mustn't be so noisy."

"Oh," she cried, her hands on her throat, "let me! It's so silent where I am—outside. Steps don't echo. Shadows don't fall. A pistol shot, that's no more than a latch falling, in my world. But I don't want to go back. I want to stay here. You can keep me here, Jamie, if you will. You will, eh? Eh, Jamie? Eh?"

She came after him at a run as he stayed by the door, his hand rattling the gilded knob. She cried in anguish—

"What? You'll still leave me, after all I've said to you? Then you may—you may, Jamie—oh, cruel, cruel! But that doesn't mean that I'll ever leave you. But you'll forget me. . . ."

"Now, Cousin, indeed I won't."

"Forget me—forget me! When I touch you, you'll say—'The wind blew a dead leaf against me!' You'll brush me off."

"I have to go, Cousin! An appointment. . . ."

"You won't see me; but I'll see you: nor hear me; but I'll hear you. I warn you, Jamie, I'll creep into your brain. I'll hear your thoughts before you think them. I'll suck your soul out, I tell you: and in the hollow, hollow places where your soul was, there I'll live!"

She stood a moment swaying from the feet upward. She was, it seemed to him at that moment, night, a night monster, cutting off from him the light that streamed in behind her through the broad panes, over the window-sill where Menella had been so lately, where Menella's pretty tools, her golden thimble, her set of scissors in the faded velvet case, her tangle of rainbow silks, still were heaped. It was as if she were denying him his right to sunshine and Menella. And then, suddenly, she was stilled in all her being—eyes, mouth, heaving breast, straining nostrils and hands, all were still on an instant, as a tree stills when the wind drops. She was translated before his eyes into the elegant Cousin Hariot of his boyish admiration—languid, graceful, arch.

"Must you go, dear Jamie? Indeed I think you must. A young woman, you know, unattended—what will Dekker and my maid say to it? Menella should be here. Where is Menella? Yes, you must go, Jamie! There, it isn't long to wait, eh, Jamie? What's a month? My dress is half made, all of the lace that you brought me. And a head, my dear, a head to dream of! Orange blossoms and dewdrops of diamonds! No feather—you don't like feathers—a gauze twist: I sent for it to Paris. It will enchant you. Shall I let you see it? But no, not lucky. You shall see it on our wedding-day."

He said—it seemed to him that he screamed at her in a voice, a womanish voice of which he was ashamed—

"Cousin Hariot, I won't marry you! I won't! Is that plain? I won't! And now I'm going, and—and—and I'm sorry, Cousin Hariot!"

He turned the handle and flung open the door and pulled it to again behind him,

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stumbling into the hall and out of the house, under the knowing eyes of Dekker, the man.

He thought he heard her call after him: he was not sure of that. He was only sure that he was well out of it, out of the room, house, street: well out of Hariot's life, never to go back again into Hariot's house and room and life.

He was only sure that the Pantiles on a spring afternoon, though he had little recollection of how he got there, was the freest, gayest place in the world, a better place than any woman's, any queen's drawing-room: and that the veriest pink-ribboned chit mincing beside Mamma upon the pavement would make him a better wife than the dark woman of his blood.

HE HAD paced the Pantiles thrice and back again, for his feet still unconsciously kept up the hurry of that departure—he refused to think of it as flight: and what with his own urgency and the jostle of the crowd in the narrow way between the shops and the colonnade, he came at last to a standstill so hot and flustered for all his sense of emancipation that he was glad at last to pause by the railed inner well and fee the well-woman to dip him up a glassful of the ice-cold water.

The draught refreshed him: it ran through his veins as strong as a draught of wine. He bade her dip him up another, and so leaned idly against the rails, sipping, enjoying the tonic bitterness of the iron on his tongue and the quieting smell of the cold water and cooling air and the pleasant chuckle of the springs as they welled up, into, and over the rust-coloured marble basins.

As it drew towards tea-time the crowd of visitors increased till the Pantiles' dark colonnades and sun-dappled open walk under the row of trees were as beswarmed, he thought, as a lime-tree by uncountable insects. The scent that the wind brought him in warm gusts, with now and then a shower of petals from the faint yellow blossoms of the lime-trees, had brought the thought into his mind: so busy were all these people, so happily engaged, murmurous as bees, and, bee-like, sucking the honey out of life.

He smiled at them, dismissing for good and all the countries of his travels, as only an Englishman can. These were his own people, these stately, leisurely folk, with their calm ways and dresses all of clean colour—pinks, primrose, blues and greens—bright but pale, northern colours: these were people he could understand and love. What was the phrase?—'Use all gently!' They used all gently, the English: they were warm, not flaming, cool, not cold, in their loves and hates. Temperate, that was the word: they were so temperate. Hariot was as uncommon among them as—as this cold well behind him: there were but three in England like it, with its bitter strength and reddened waters.

Thus Jamie Babyon, loosing his thoughts idly upon the air, his mind all the while accompanying no one thought very far, any more than his eye accompanied any one particular figure of all the figures that streamed past him up and down the Pantiles. The natural reaction from his emotion of half an hour ago, reinforcing the bright confusion of spa life, made him drowsy, inclined him, could he but move his lazy legs, to turn to the green refreshment of the Common beyond the Arcade. He was, indeed, on the point of departure when his outer eyes were caught by a particular movement in the all-moving crowd, a particular colour among the multiplied colours, by a known shape in the indifferent throng.

Towards him came a gown of primrose linen sprigged with small cornflowers and carnations. Over the short petticoat swelled the hip panniers, and from the panniers the tight bodice rose, sleekly moulded as a young birch-tree: above it again head and neck were shaded by the forward-tilting leghorn hat and cornflower-coloured hat-ribbons fluttering down upon a bosom silky white and silky pink, like birch bark. A green scarf with a long tasselled fringe completed the picture of a sapling birch, a lady of the woods, walking.

He put down his glass hastily on the flat-topped marble railing and sprang down the shallow step or two to dive into the crowd and intercept Menella Traill.

"Menella! Miss Traill! Madam!"

At his address there was a frank reddening of cheek and neck that displayed anew the exquisite texture of the skin. Menella's eyes sparkled as the tide of colour rose to enhance their blue. He wanted to cry out enchanted at the beautiful sight of clear blue against clear pink, to point it out to the world as he might have done any display that pleased him—flowers, landscape, a tray of jewels. But instead he said, decorously subduing the pleasure in his voice—

"Miss Traill! I am very fortunate. I thought you were visiting your sister."

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Her eyelids drooped. She said in a low voice—

"I have no sister." And at his gesture of surprise, seeing his puzzled face, she added, twisting the tassel of her parasol—"You don't understand. She says what comes into her head. It was to tell me to go—I knew I was to go."

"But I didn't want you to go. Didn't you know that too? I wanted you to stay."

She put up her hands to her cheeks as if she would restrain the flooding colour, as if she could push away her blushes with her mittened hands.

"Did you?" said his Menella: and then—"I came to drink the waters. You see—I have my glass."

She fumbled in the basket on her arm and drew from it, hidden under a square of silk, a child's tumbler of purple Bristol glass, and began to make her way once more to the free well, he at her side. She was hesitating on the wet slippery step, waiting her moment to stoop between the jostling drinkers, before his dazzled wits returned to him, exultant. But then it was Menella's turn to be dazzled and encompassed, to have her glass taken from her, to have her arm pressed against the arm, have her hand lie on the embroidered cuff of a fine young gentleman's coat, to feel the lace of his ruffle brush her hand, to be escorted up the steps and on to the cool piazza of the private well and, fluttered, to watch the well-woman receive the little glass and a coin that chinked against it. The well-woman set a table and a chair for the lady, and bustled down the steps and returned with the little purple glass filled with cold water for the lady to drink.

THE lady drank: her blue eyes shone above the purple glass: her wry mouth at the bitter water made him laugh, and his whole heart cried out again— How beautiful! how kissable! how dear! The well-woman folded her hands complacently upon each other and, leaning against the wall of the well, stared up at them inquisitively. Across the square a stroller lifted a quizzing glass and chuckled.

Menella, drying her glass on the silk napkin and tucking it away again in the basket, caught the well-woman's look. She rose, disturbed, not taking, feigning not to see the hand darted out to help her rise.

"I—we—it's better not to sit here. I must go now, Sir James!"

He besought her—another glass—another minute—coffee, chocolate, cakes! She would not look at him.

"Please—I should go—I want to go. Your cousin will not like it. Your cousin is left alone now—now that you are here. She will be wanting me. She would not like me to come here unattended." And then, anxiously—"You'll not tell her? You will not, Sir James. It's so dull to be attended always. At home I could go anywhere."

He offered her his arm, with a—

"May I not attend you?" And she took it, saying—

"I meant Dekker; but you ought not to come with me. . . ."

He stooped to her—

"Why not, Menella?"

She would not look at him.

"—or call me Menella."

He gave her an inquiring look. It was not in him to suspect her of coquetry. He was merely anxious to discover her meaning. And she, as honest as he, walked beside him in a flushed silence. Neither suspected that the encounter had dizzied the other, that each felt the need of a moment's recollection, of a pause for arrangement of ideas. Yet they were, because of the sympathy between them, able to walk without discomfort side by side, the embarrassment of each oddly soothed by the other's presence. They left the Pantiles behind them, passed the Chapel-of-Ease, and were half-way up the cobbles of Chapel Place before the boy said slowly—

"Why shouldn't I call you Menella?"

The girl fumbled for words.

"She wouldn't like it—Hariot—my mistress." And then, at the implied protest of his look, of his turn of the head on the word mistress, she added—"She is my mistress."

He said soberly—

"She's not mine."

"What?" she cried amazed.

He blurted it out—

"We're not going to be married, my cousin and I. We settled it this morning." And at that she clasped her hands upon his arm and cried out in an excited, childish voice that moved him inexpressibly—

"Jamie, is that true? Is it? Is it? Oh, poor Hariot! But is it? But why?"

He looked at her without answering her in words, and her eyelids drooped again. That delighted him. He liked to watch her face change, flush, pale, lighten or droop at his bidding. He gave a shout of laughter, of sheer enjoyment voiced in friendly laughter, and the blue flash woke in her face once more as she said, smiling yet apprehensive—"I must go home!" and did not stir.

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Nor did he. They were content to look at each other. They stood thus in the middle of the street, unconscious of the passers-by, for some ten minutes. They broke up the stream of life as a tuft of water-cress and royal loosestrife parted from the river bank will, for the length of a summer day, anchor itself in a shallow of the stream that has detached it, defying the running water, compelling the overwhelming waters to eddy about its frail islet, to flow to right and left of its purple towers and youthful greenery. The moving clouds in the sky could not have less affected the young man and woman than the movement of the crowd about them. Within the enchanted circle that they had drawn about themselves they conducted their affair, oblivious of creation, conducted it with looks, with smiles, with quickened breath, at last with words—

"Menella!"

"Yes?"

"You do know why?"

"Yes—no. . . ."

"You do know why?"

"Oh, poor Hariot!"

"What else could I do, Menella, when I found out?"

"What did you find out?"

"That I—didn't love her. It was on that day when I saw you cry."

She said, shivering—

"She struck me, Jamie! She struck at me with her scissors. Look!"

There was a long, half-healed scratch upon her arm, a furrow that might have been made by a claw of a cat. He darkened, till she cried out, terrified—

"Don't look like that! You look like Hariot when you frown. Don't frown!"

He was in a rage that struggled with his tenderness to her, the hurt creature—

"You never told me. You never showed me."

"I couldn't, then."

"Now you can, Menella!"

She nodded—

"Yes, now I can."

He watched her pull the green mitten once more over the scar and told her thickly—

"I could kill her for hurting you."

She deprecated—

"Ladies punish their maids. I'm her companion."

"You're not. You belong to me. You shan't go back to her. Menella, what are we to do?"

She said weakly—

"Of course I must go back."

"We'll get married, Menella. Nobody can stop us. I'm twenty-one."

She shook her head.

"Hariot will stop us." And then, with a frantic pretty wringing of her hands that made him put out his own and hold those small, despairing hands firmly in his—"Oh, we are being foolish! You're to marry your cousin. How can you marry me? I'm your cousin's companion. You're Sir James Babyon. I think we're mad."

He said—

"Mad? We? It's Hariot! Hariot's mad, Menella, isn't she? Isn't that the truth of it? She has times and seasons. Isn't that it? You've known it, haven't you?" For she was nodding, with her face grown white, a "yes" to all his questions.

"You guessed?" she said: "but I never told you, did I? I was sworn not to tell."

The boy caught at her hand—

"Would you have let me marry her? Would you have followed her up the aisle? Would you have stood behind us, Menella, and seen and heard me marry her? Would you? Would you? That would have been cruel."

"To me," she sighed, a hand on her breast.

"No," he said, "to me."

She murmured—

"I was going to run away."

At that he had his inspiration. He knew then and afterwards that it was the moment of his life.

"We'll run away together!"

"Jamie!"

"YES, my dear, that's what we'll do! Now listen to me, Menella! You'll go home now, go back, I mean—it isn't your home—back to fetch your clothes. . . ." Then, as he saw the terror in her face—"No, you shan't, you shan't do that, you shall come with me now, now to my rooms—no, not even that—we'll take a coach—now, on our walk—and we'll drive to my lodgings! We'll stop there only five minutes and I'll order my man Jabez to see to my affairs, to pay my charges and follow us. He's a good fellow, Jabez: his father is gamekeeper at Babyon. Oh, you shall know them all—all my people at Babyon! But we, we won't wait for Jabez: we'll go straight away to London.

"There's a parson at the Temple, a fellow told me, a parson who asks no questions: he shall marry us to-night. That's to make all safe, Menella! No waiting for banns and so on. But they're true mar-

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riages: it's been proved in the courts; so you needn't be frightened. Oh, d'you think I'd not make sure? I want you for my own wife, Menella! It's because I love you, Menella, that I'm so hasty in this. And then a honeymoon, out of England! I know my way about. I'll take you to all the places where I've been—Paris, Milan, Rome—I'll show you everything: and so home to Babyon. Isn't that a good plan, Menella? I tell you, my dear, that's what we'll do!"

She worshipped him, as he urged her with sparkling eyes:

"Will we? Now? Never go back to Hariot? Is it possible? Yet she's been kind to me, Jamie, in between. Aren't we wicked to Hariot? Ungrateful? But oh, Jamie, to be with you always! Oh, Jamie, do you mean it? Oh, I never knew any one like you! Now? This afternoon? I have no proper clothes. To be married to-day! Oh, Jamie!"

And he, intoxicated by the pride of decision and those soft "Oh, Jamies!" tucked her hand under his arm again and they made off together, that enchanted pair of children, for the mews near Jamie's lodging. Sir James Babyon ordered his coach and put into it "your lady," as he called her to the grooms. He carried out his programme as befitted a bridegroom triumphantly on the edge of perfect happiness, bore himself as a traveller experienced in the coaches, the postillions, the lodgings and the fees of five nations.

The groom mounted behind, the coachman cracked his whip, and the equipage set off for his lodgings. Menella, shrinking into the roomy cavern of the coach, wondered at the calm of the man Jabez, opening the coach door. Jabez received coin and papers and directions with resignation. Jabez in his fashion also assured listeners hidden in coaches that he had travelled, that he could be relied upon to leave London for Paris, Paris for Milan, Milan for Rome, Rome for where you please and home again at five minutes' notice. Tunbridge Wells for London—a bagatelle this to Jabez, faintly reproachful because he had not been allowed to deal with the coach and the coachman and the grooms.

The listener, measuring Jabez as a future house-fellow, felt relief. Dekker, the only other man-servant she knew, had been too knowing, too much in the confidence of Hariot's guardians and aunts and nurses: and since Hariot's recovery and resumption of power and self-establishment in a new house purged of relatives, Dekker had been too much prepared to be in the confidence of any fluttered companion. Dekker was the chamberlain of Hariot's kingdom and, like such court officials, had been ready to combine with the favourite. Dekker, avoided, evaded, repulsed, had been a lion in the path of Menella.

But this young Jabez was straightforward, friendly-eyed, willing. His pleasant Devon speech, that speech which makes the peasant his master's equal, poorer than he only in vocabulary, made him in Menella's sight almost a lesser Jamie, a younger, poorer, inconsiderable Jamie. He had the same small well-shaped springy body, the same upright carriage, the same tones, the same fresh cheek, swinging arm and cheerful eye. Only he had not the assured air of Jamie. He was the decent young servant, by no stretch of imagination ever the young master. Yet kinship was there—a kinship of race: the same air, earth and water had made and moulded master and man alike: and to Menella, of another county, another stock, they had the resemblance of two foreigners of the same country to each other.

That was a point in Jabez' favour: she liked him at sight and knew that just as Jamie Babyon was from now on a barrier, as secure a barrier as some sparkling stretch of salt water, between her and Hariot's dark lands, so the lesser Jamie, Jabez, the land-brother, the servant, would be a match for any back-door recurrence of the town-bred mongrel, Dekker.

Meanwhile, she heard them, with a wonderful lessening of apprehension, speak of Dekker.

"And Jabez. . . ."

"Yes, sir?"

"As for packets, notes, letters. . ."

"There's a letter come for you, sir, now I think of it."

"If it's a charge, open it and pay it: pay all charges!"

"No, sir, it's a note. Miss Babyon's man brought it a moment since. He's in the kitchen now, sir, waiting your return for an answer. He wasn't sure if his mistress had meant him to wait or no: so I bade him wait."

"Fetch it!"

He did not speak to Menella nor she to him, but they changed anxious glances as they waited for Jabez and the letter, till they saw for themselves that indeed it was no letter but a small packet carefully sealed. As Jamie broke it open a small bright object dropped from the loosened folds of paper, dropped to Menella's lap. She exclaimed—

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"Jamie, a ring! Jamie, it's her ring! Oh, does that mean . . .?"

The boy checked her, flushing.

"Not now, Menella!" and turned to his man. "No answer, Jabez! Shut the door!" And then, leaning head and shoulders through the coach window as the man stepped back—"Jabez, you're to say nothing of this—of my departure! Whip up!"

He drew in his head as Jabez turned to the coachman. But Menella, peering through the glass window, saw a sight which disquieted her. The open doorway of Jamie's lodgings showed the straight passage through the house and the farther doorway, framing a view of neat garden clumped with peonies. Even as she looked, green garden and crimson flowers were blotted out by the entrance of a figure. It was in blackish shadow, but she knew it nevertheless and cried out—

"Jamie, there's Dekker! He's seen us!" But as she cried and shrank the coach began to move, to roll, to rumble. Jamie, sitting down beside her, put his arm about her shoulder and kissed her heartily as the houses slid by them. She leant against him, eased by his touch, comforted by his kiss, and presently, shyly, returned it.

"I love you, Jamie!" said Menella.

"And I you, Menella!"

She sighed happily.

A MILE went by like a moment. As they rolled through Southborough she looked out and thought that the village green and the noble trees upon it and the surrounding cottages were like the beginnings of *Beulah*, and that they were thirty-three miles now from the *Celestial City*. But, being a woman, it was necessary for her to enhance her present beatitude by contemplation of perils past and to come. She stirred in the boy's arms.

"Jamie, Dekker saw us."

"Are you sure?"

"He saw me. Now he'll tell Hariot. Oh, what do you think she'll do?"

His arm tightened round her.

"What could she do? Besides we're unfair to her, Menella! She's a fine creature, my cousin. She's forgiven me already."

"How do you know?"

"Why, she sent back my ring, the Babyon ring."

"Oh, the ring!" And her fingers, remembering what it was they clutched so tightly, relaxed and fell apart. The circlet of jewels lay winking in her palm. She fingered it, turning it round slowly, checking the stones.

"M o o n s t o n e, iasper — what's this, Jamie?"

"Zircon."

"What a queer name! That's M. I. Z.—pearl; then amethyst—what's this?"

"Heliotrope—bloodstone."

"I see. P.A.H. MIZPAH. It's very old, isn't it?"

"Put it on!"

"Should I? It's Hariot's."

"It's the Babyon bride-ring. Lady Babyon wears it. It's not personal. I'll give you your own ring from me, dearest. But this is the Babyon ring. That's why Hariot sent it back. She understands."

Said Menella with a flash of jealousy that showed as oddly on her candid face as lightning at noon—

"How do you know? You haven't read her letter."

"No more I have!"

He opened the paper and stared puzzled at the two scrawled sentences and the extraordinary signature beneath, the "Hariot" with its three black rigid strokes raking down the paper. They ran from the *h* and the *r* and the *t* with no returning upward line, so that the word "Hariot" was lifted by them like a banner, floating above supporting poles. But the message ran clear enough—

I send it back. I'll do my own watching.
Hariot.

Bewildered, he put the paper in Menella's lap.

"What does she mean? Oh, you may see: it's not private. *My own watching?* Oh, she *is* mad."

"It's the ring, I think—Mizpah. You know what it means, don't you? It's in the Bible. You ought to know."

" 'God keep you'—isn't that it?"

"Not quite. Father preached on it once—oh, such a beautiful sermon! Laban said it to Jacob when they parted after the quarrel—'God watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another.' But. . . ." She pored over the note—*"I'll do my own watching!* What does she mean? It doesn't make sense, does it?" She looked up at him, her voice shrilled: "Jamie, what is it? What's the matter?"

For he was staring at her with an air of panic—

"We are talking about her again. We talk of nothing but Hariot. Shall we always be talking about Hariot? Menella, what shall we do if. . . ." Suddenly he was speechless.

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She put her arms round his neck, sweetly, as a wife might.

"Dear Jamie, what is it? What are you looking at? Jamie, look at *me!* Of course we talked of her. We've had to, things happening like this. But now—we'll not think of her now any more. Poor Hariot! We can't help her, you see! No one can help her. We must just not even think of her."

He returned her embrace; but his eyes still looked through her and beyond her as he cried—

"Menella, we'll be true to each other! She could never come between us now, could she, Menella?"

"Never, Jamie!"

"Menella, do you love me?"

"I do, Jamie! I do!"

Gradually his clasp relaxed.

"Menella, throw away that paper! Tear it first!"

Obediently she tore it and scattered the fragments over the brandishing, clutching, long-tailed rosy hedges as the coach brushed its way between them.

He watched her, ease coming back into his face, into his pose. He managed to laugh.

"I was a fool, Menella. Put on your ring, my dear, my dearest Lady Babyon! Tonbridge, is it? Tonbridge already? Oh, Menella, only thirty miles more!"

"Oh, Jamie!"

The coach rumbled on.

CHAPTER II

ON THE seventeenth of June in the year of our Lord 1750, in the early hours, James Babyon of Babyon Court in the County of Devon, Bart., was united to Menella Traill of the parish of Westerham, Kent, in the furtive little Chapel-of-Ease that lurked on the outskirts of Mayfair. Two yawning witnesses knocked out of their beds and a fuddled clerk hastily fetched by the parson himself from a neighbouring alehouse, witnessed the ceremony. The couple-beggar performed it in a manner wonderfully compact of resentment and obsequy, as the tick of the vestry clock, wheezing on to daylight, vied with the chink of guineas against the wedding-ring in the bridegroom's pocket for his consideration.

The bride thought that the parson was like his church. The ivied porch had loomed out of the blue summer darkness with a welcoming air of innocence, of country-come-to-town; never was a humbler little church looked down upon by fashionable neighbours. But its interior was sophisticated, choked with pews like sheep-pens on market day, with a baroque hugger-mugger of cherubs and composite pillars and faded rep hangings.

There was an all-pervading reek, too, of mist, dust, incense, mice, candle-smoke and damp, that might have made two young romantics pause in their adventure by daylight in calm blood and, though they loved, decide for decent lodgings, three weeks' banns and a congregation to watch them married. But these youngsters had been set running on their road by fear that they did not acknowledge. They ran away perhaps from the fate that runs after golden youth; but they called their pursuer Hariot. A breakdown near Chislehurst had terrified them. When they reached London they would not, could not wait for decent day, but hurried on to the furtive little church, prepared, if need were, to sit the hours out in the church porch, chattering like children in defiant conspiracy to frustrate their pursuer, Hariot.

"Courage, Menella! We must go through with it now, my dear! I know we're doing right. It's the only way. When we're married, you see, she can't come between us."

"Yes, yes, I see! But oh, Jamie, what is this place? I don't like it. But I see it won't do to wait. Dekker may have told her. Oh, suppose she follows us!"

"That's it, you see! And you a minor."

"Am I? Oh!"

"But once we're married, what can she do? It won't do to wait till to-morrow—get married now and be safe."

"Safe from Hariot."

But when the parson came, though they welcomed him as children hail St. Nicholas, he shocked them. He set them before him, he ranged the witnesses, whispered to the clerk, opened his book and began. Gabbling, stumbling, whining, he launched the pair into marriage as a careless boatman might push off a freighted rowboat into a choppy sea.

His drunken breath fouled the air, and Menella shrank and would not look at him as she listened to the exordium, and fixed her eyes instead upon the two altar candles flaring and guttering behind him. For while a part of her was absorbed in her situation, conscious, though she did not turn her head, of every movement of her bridegroom, every change of expression, though her soul was fluttering into peace as a bird flutters down upon and droops

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into its nest, she was yet able to exercise that capacity for thinking along two paths at once which the human spirit displays in moments of deep feeling. And she did think it strange that the candles should gutter as if blown by a wind when she herself could hardly breathe for the closeness and stillness of the Chapel's dead air. She supposed that some trick of the draughts caused the flames to dance and sway thus wildly on their wicks, so that the parson's shadow was incessantly flung forward across his book and on to the outstretched right hands, hers, Jamie's, blotting them also with shadow. Nevertheless the flames and the shadows disturbed her sense of security and she was glad to feel Jamie's warm fingers clasping her cold ones, glad to hold his hand tight in turn and to feel his hand yet again as he put upon her finger the Mizpah ring.

The facets of the jewels dinted her flesh as he did so and she noticed this, wincing. Indeed she was noticing details in those few minutes that she had never before observed. Everything within the circle of her vision glowed or shone with a luminous distinctness, as though she were looking through clear water at the pebbly bottom of a river. The stuff of her bridegroom's coat-sleeve, the lines, veins, texture, shape and colour of his hand, the cheesy fingers of the parson, and his blackened nails, the winking colours of the ring, its intricate setting, the red and black tiles of the floor far below, under their hands, in darkness—all this her eye photographed and retained so long as she lived. She could bring it all back into her mind in sad or happy moments of her later life by the mere thought—"my wedding-day!"

She looked up at her husband with a sharp lift of the head as the ring married them. He was white and he made his answers in a voice that she had never heard before. "Oh, how he feels it!" she thought to herself swiftly, with a rush of wonder and thankfulness to him for the whiteness of his face and his shaken voice. "It's his marriage, you see, as well as mine. I hadn't understood that somehow. Strange—it's as big a thing to him as it is to me. Who knows, it may even be bigger! He's frightened too by the change in his life, just as I'm frightened. Oh, if we both feel frightened together in the same way, then we know each other, then we shall surely be happy!" These thoughts fleeted through her mind as his lips began the strange, familiar—"With this ring. . . ."

Then they knelt together.

But when the parson, stooping to them, had pronounced them man and wife and had straightened himself again, he turned upon his clerk in a savage undertone, his head jerked sideways—

"Who's behind the door? Quiet them there, can't you? What lout's behind that door? See to it!" And so returned to the blessing.

But, though the service halted for him, the clerk, when his turn came to bless all that feared the Lord including the bewildered bridal pair, refused to proceed until he had cleared up with the parson this problem of the lout behind the door.

"All doors are shut, your reverence!"

"Vestry door, you fool! I tell you some one's there!"

"Shut, sir, and locked. Look ye, here's the key."

Said the parson—

"Are you drunk? I heard the latch go. I heard the click of it. And a wind like a knife went by. See, there's a candle gone out. Here, give me t'other one—come along now!"

He seized the altar candle, whose flame was still enough now. It dwindled up to the rafters in a straight unwavering line as if the flame were a woman-devil's distaff from which a thread was being drawn out and upwards to be wound upon a star.

FOLLOWED by the clerk and swearing at him, the parson shuffled across the choir floor to the vestry, leaving before the altar his married couple newly risen from their knees. Menella faltered—

"Jamie, what's the matter with them? What is it? What was it? Did you hear anything? The candle did flicker. I saw it. I felt the wind. Didn't you? But—a latch dropping—I never heard that."

"A latch?" He started: he gasped: he was unaccountably moved. He put his hand to his head and looked down at her with the air of a man chasing an escaping memory. "A latch? A latch? Where did I hear—? Who said—who spoke to me of a latch dropping?"

Menella said—

"He said so—the parson—that dreadful man."

"Was it that? Was it he?" And then, as their situation dawned on him, he began to rage—"They've been drinking! Drunken swine! That such a man should be countenanced . . . ! My dear, that I should have had to bring you here! I can't forgive myself."

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She said—

"Why do you trouble? He—they—nothing can spoil it—nothing can come between us. We're married."

The parson was returning.

"My dear sir—ahem, madam—apologies—a trick of the hearing—a trick of the light. It's as he says, quite empty—swept—ha—hum—and garnished. But I swear to you I heard the click of a latch, and with these gentlemen of the town making no bones how or what they rob—the own house of—ahem—my lord Sandwich three nights since—I was bound to check and search. A click of the latch—gently lifted—could ha' sworn it. Well, sir and madam, to the matter once more—ahem!" He fumbled anew the leaves of his tattered book.

Said Sir James Babyon, his lady on his arm, stammering a little, but fierce of eye—

"We've had what we wanted of you, sir! We are married, I take it? Then, sir, the marriage lines for my wife here! We'll do without your blessing." And so moved hot and stately to the vestry.

The parson was accustomed to the whims of his patrons, for his chapel was as much used by the rich, the titled and the familied seeking unostentatious wedlock with unequals, as it was by the adventurers and adventuresses of the town. His office was too convenient, indeed had been too often used by authority, including, it was whispered, by a Personage himself, to be lightly illegalized. It was the parson's boast that no one, doll or duke, walked up his aisle and knelt at his altar without coming out as strictly wedded as if they had been coupled in St. Paul's.

Instructing his sucessor and son, he laid it down that "Eyes have they and see not, and ears have they and do not hear" was written for the special instruction of the cloth, and that the parson with his mouthful of questions got paid in pence when he himself, with a still tongue, blind eyes and short ears, earned guineas. He therefore lifted not an eyebrow nor flickered a lid at his young client's address, but followed meekly to the vestry, superintended the signatures of the witnesses, completed the certificate, received the guineas and bowed his clients down the nave and out at the porch with an air. But as the coach drove away into the lightening greys of the morning, he had a word for his clerk, awake by this time and grown chilly as the dawn.

"What the devil happened, eh, Nat? What was the plot? What woman had you tucked away within there?"

"Woman, your reverence? None, I do assure you. Not a she mouse."

"What? When I heard the swish of a skirt? Come now, Nat, all's well that ends well and they've gone away married. But you've taken a trifle from some friend of the lady, eh, or the gentleman, come to see the knot safe tied? I thought they'd come to spoil it."

"I'd not let 'em, your reverence! But I assure you there was no-one there."

"There had better not be. I've never had a marriage stopped in my church yet. Let this be the last time, Nat, that they bribe you!"

"There was no man or woman there, sir—swear to God!"

"Pooh, why lie to me? I say I heard breathing and the drop of the latch. Come now, who borrowed the key of the outer door?"

"None, sir! It's in your own cassock pocket. Feel now!"

The couple-beggar felt and swore.

"Will you tell me how the devil it got away then?"

Said the clerk, and shivered a little in the sharp air—

"It? You do well to say 'it.' There was naught in the room but sighs and shadows."

"Shadows?"

"Sir, the room was a-crawl with shadows."

"Why, when a candle gutters in wind...."

"I'm from the west. Did you ever chance to see an otter suppling down to a river's edge? Such a shadow, hunting. . . ."

"What?"

"I'll not say. But look along there now!" And the two stared after the diminishing coach.

The armoury of the lifting sun arrowed, splintered, speared and darted off the wet roofs and walls and windows of the street; for there had been rain in the night. As the coach, wet also, rolled forward like Fortuna's silver globe on wheels, its own long shadow had indeed the air of crawling after it, and when the coach turned into Clarges Street it seemed to the watchers that the shadow overtook and swallowed it whole.

MENELLA was wedded in London but, save for unromantical journey necessaries, she was dressed in Paris—a daffodil bride, for the reigning favourite had had a golden fit and all the world wore yellow. But once robed, gloved, shod and hatted as

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"Better come to me, Jamie, where it's quiet," said a voice in his ear.
"Jump, Jamie—over and down!"

became a Lady Babyon, Menella had done with Paris. She wanted Jamie: she wanted, and he no less wanted, the pleasure of experiencing through the intimacies of travel the fascination of their doubled existence; for to say *"we"* was still a conscious amusement to them both. They enjoyed driving lordly in their coach through crowds, throngs, masses, of the alien rest of the world. Such a joint passage emphasized their identity with each other. Jamie and Menella, first and second person singular, such good company one for the other, became instantly first person plural, a self-sufficient "we," when any one or more of the superfluous millions invaded the spiritual island of their privacy by word or look or gesture.

And indeed Paris, since Jamie last honoured her with a visit, had learned to stare. Jamie noticed, without irritation, for who could help looking twice at his Menella, that Paris had a habit of making way for them, gaping after them as if they were royal when they strolled down a boulevard or entered arm in arm the low-browed, darkling shops. Paris, unaccountably intrigued, would not let them be invisible. So they left Paris, which they regarded, let it be said, merely as a stage of their progress—the progress of Sir James and his Lady Babyon through Europe, through life, through eternal happiness by coach.

They drove southward and drove fast. It was, indeed, as if, for all their pleasure in each other and their new state, the impetus of their escape still carried them forward in an unnatural hurry. At the end of a day's sight-seeing, as they sat over their supper on some high French balcony or took the moonlit air under the shadows of cathedral towers, Jamie would hesitate and soon begin, hurriedly, not looking at Menella—

"My dear, this is a dull place for you. Have you seen all that you want to see? It's as you choose, my darling. I've seen the place before. It's to see you see it that I brought you. But if you've had enough, if you're ready to go on. . . ."

And Menella, trim in her ways as in her

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sweet, neat soul, would set her chambermaid to the packing before she went to bed, would be up again at cock-crow, singing softly for joy, in interrupted, inquiring snatches, like a bird at an open cage door peering out excitedly. Menella, too, was always ready to go on.

Thus it was that Jabez, delayed by circumstances of which his master and mistress knew nothing, did not catch up with the wanderers until they were preparing in their own minds to be tired of Milan.

They had a reason.

Jamie affected the theatre, still more the Opera. He was, indeed, open to music, sensitive and critical, and curiously moved always by certain notes in a voice or an instrument. Also, he composed: an entr'acte of his had once been performed in the very theatre to which he, on the first night of their arrival, had conducted Menella: and as patron and amateur he had been welcomed pleasantly and made free of the place. As bridegroom—a titled one, and very much richer than the boy of a year ago—the welcome swelled into enthusiasm for a night and a night. The box at their second visit was filled with visitors between each act, with people of the theatre and the town ready to renew acquaintance with the gentleman and beseech, in broken English, introductions to the ladies. Proudly was Menella handed out of the shadows of the box into the bright candlelight of the withdrawing-room. Gentlemen, enchanted with Menella's complexion and downcast eyelids, overwhelmed her with incomprehensible compliments. It was long before they inquired, with the embarrassed recollection of folk forced by good manners to execute a tedious duty, after Madame's companion.

Companion? Madame, blushing, had none save—a glance at the young husband completed the sentence and proved to the onlooker how blue English eyes could be.

"But, Madame, no companion? Impossible!"

Madame, fluttered at such extreme surprise, had left England hurriedly. Their servant was to follow them, had not yet caught them up.

"But yesterday Madame had a companion?"

"No, indeed!"

"But here, in this box?"

"Here?" Menella stared. Their language was beyond her or her language beyond the gentlemen. The gentlemen seemed to know it. With infinitesimal shrugs the subject was changed and, the curtain going up soon after, the gentlemen hastily retired to boxes of their own.

When, the next night, with *ne' giorni tuoi felici* running like wine through her soul, Menella clamoured prettily for more music and Jamie was very ready to consent to visit the Opera again, they had music indeed—Pergolesi with his lute shook the cardboard trees for them—but they had fewer visitors between the acts: and on the third night, none. Nor was the fat little manager to be seen emerging in gallantry from his money-box, as Jamie entered the lobby, Menella on his arm. They missed the friendly flutter of welcome, were once more, each for a personal instant, two solitary strangers in a crowd. Then, with the magical simultaneous pressure of hand and supporting arm, they were first person plural again.

"We'll go home early, I think," said Jamie, at the end of the act.

"We will," agreed Menella, watching as she spoke the orange-seller in the seething pit below crying her wares among the standing crowds. The girl's eyes met Menella's and she made a swift odd gesture with her hand. Menella pulled at Jamie's sleeve.

"Look! Look, dearest! She signed to me. Does she want to sell us oranges? Let her come up, Jamie!"

But Jamie beckoned in vain. The girl would not budge for them, did not or would not see them. Then the curtain rose once more and the music rose also, streaming out over the house like Lethe in flood: and Menella forgot the orange-girl and her odd gestures, forgot how cold the box was, always seemed to be in spite of the hot theatre air and the warm southern night without, forgot everything save the music and Jamie's face open-mouthed with enjoyment. But as she went out afterwards she noticed that the servitor who called their coach made, as he stood back before them, the same odd gesture with the long and little finger pointed from his clenched hand.

IT WAS not till two nights later that she found out the reason of that peculiar gesture. On the next day they had not gone to hear their music. They had driven out into the country in the morning to pick mulberries: and so on with stained lips to Monaz, that Menella, privileged pretty lady, might fan herself with Queen Theodalinda's fan. Jamie, abetted by the smiling brother, would have fined out a tangled golden ringlet with Theodalinda's

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comb; but Menella would not let him and put down the fan too, quickly, with a shiver.

All the country superstitions of her childhood rushed into her mind. A dead woman's fan, a dead woman's comb—she wished she had not touched either. Jamie quoted—

"Queens have died young and fair. . . ."

and made the ready tears start. She did not know, this tremulous, smiling Menella, this rainbow young wife, why she was so foolishly startled, any more than a brimming cup knows why a touch spills its sparkling burden. But Jamie's voice—it was not only she herself who thought so: everybody said that Jamie's voice was a fine one—Jamie's voice could always move her to a quaint passion of enjoyment when he repeated to her long verses from the classics that he had learned for his own pleasure.

He was ever very ready to declaim to her: and who'll blame Jamie because he could not resist his audience? He had, nevertheless, an unaffected ardour for good music and good verse.

Driving home in the late evening with the moon silvering Milan's spires and turning the red roofs into more mulberries, as Jamie pointed out, Menella begged for the poem again, and Jamie let her have it—

"Brightness falls from the air:
Queens have died young and fair. . . ."

She drew in a breath as if her face were buried in a rose.

"It is lovely—'young and fair'!"

"That's you, Menella—

'Young and fair:

Dust hath closed Helen's eye. . . .'"

"Oh, Jamie, but I am not going to die."

"My dearest—as if I meant. . . ."

"No, I know. Of course not. It was silly of me. And did he die, the poor man, in the pestilence? You see, he says—

'I am sick: I must die:'

Did he?"

"He thought he was going to, anyway: and yet he wrote it, you see," said Jamie, proudly, as if of an elder brother. "That was great, I think, Menella, to fling such lines at death. It's cowardly to give in to death. I—I despise a suicide. Don't you, Menella?"

"Do you? I don't know. Oh, I know what you mean, of course. But I don't want to think about dying. And yet—

'Brightness falls. . . .'

It makes me shiver, it's so beautiful. It's like the moonlight falling down on the roofs. Say it to me again!"

He said it to her again, happily.

They jingled back into Milan, at last, innocently intoxicated, both of them, with Nashe's verse and Jamie's voice and the marvel of being married, Menella to Jamie and Jamie to Menella. It was too late to think of the Opera; but they did not care for that. As Menella said, the moonlight was like music in the dead of night—"At least, you know what I mean! Can silence be a sort of sound in itself?"

Jamie said that it could: and so, the matter settled, they fell asleep listening to that ivory sound.

But when next morning they proposed to play with the cathedral during daylight and to book their seats at the theatre for the evening, no seats were to be had. Jamie, escorting Menella home to dress and strolling down to the theatre square to buy seats and fill in the hour that she took to the business of dressing, expostulated in vain.

No seats!

With infinitudes of regret—no seats!

To-morrow then?

The clerk, not their old friend the manager, departed mysteriously on a long holiday in the country, but a stranger, uninterested, unimpressed, explained without qualifying by a friendly look the infinitudes of regrets, that there was no box fit for placing at the disposal of milord upon the morrow. All seats were taken: all, by long prearrangement, days, weeks, a month ago, taken for the night!

Now was it not a strange business? The theatre had not been full at any one of their three visits. Strolling home slowly and reluctantly, Jamie felt downright ashamed to present himself before Menella—an *Ali Baba* whose "Open Sesame" had failed. Unaccountable business! Menella's disappointment, pictured in advance, depressed him. Indeed he was astonished at the sudden heavy depression that settled on him, but he put it all down to his solicitude for Menella. Impossible to own himself, and to Menella, baffled by the booking arrangements of a pack of foreigners! In the very street of his lodging the resolution took him, not to be beaten by a pack

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of foreigners. He beckoned to an unknown hanger-on, doubtfully in attendance on the inn's customers, and, giving money, promised more. The man was to wait in the theatre forecourt: if any tickets were returned at the last moment, he was to secure them from the theatre, from the ticketholder, by fair means or foul. "You don't come back without tickets! Understand?"

The man, furtive and ready, understood, to judge by monkeylike noddings and winkings and mouthings, much more of the matter than Jamie did. What had the fellow got into his head? These foreigners!

JAMIE paused on his way to Menella's rooms to look out over the railing of the inn gallery, to look down upon these foreigners in their inn courtyard. The gay, crazy comings and goings of Italy amused him finely: it was like a peepshow. This was life, looked down upon as God looks down from a height. He felt himself in his right place, the Englishman looking down upon the foreign ant-heap. Lifted above her, he was affectionate with Italy, benign. He so well entertained his young greedy eyes, and his young island satisfaction in being isolated, that a pull at his sleeve took him aback.

The messenger had already returned—a successful messenger. He could not believe that the man should have gone and come again so soon, and been successful. There, however, in the bronze paw lay the voucher for a box. He bestowed money, a liberal handful, as he questioned the man. How did he come by it so soon? Had some one just returned it? But the dialect answer was beyond him. He pocketed the voucher therefore and, turning to the staircase, left the monkey to his monkeyings—a poked finger, a spit on the floor and a frantic jump backwards out of the black glide of Jamie's shadow.

But Jamie, though he had got his voucher and saved his self-esteem, could not get back his spirits. His oppression had grown: it hung on him, dragging from his shoulders like a cloak. He actually turned once to see if something had not in fact caught him by the shoulders. But there was nothing on the stair but his shadow, swayed by the whim of the candle that flickered on the stairhead above him. He sighed. The sensation bothered him in a way that no physical weariness could do, forced him to realize that it was the brain rather than the body which had turned to lead. The inside of his head was as if overweighted, stuffed suddenly to bursting point with dark thoughts.

Brightness falls from the air. . . .

The words pattered in his head like rain on a lead roof—

Queens have died young and fair. . . .

No, not rain—a tolling bell.

Queens have died. . . .

If Menella died! What a horror it was to realize that Menella, even Menella, young and fair, might die. A frightened horse, a pricked finger, any trifling mishap, and Menella might die. Menella might—must bear a child, an heir to Babyon, and might die in bearing it. So it was ordered in a world of chance. He had never thought of such things before. Then why now? Because he was stupidly tired, heavy-limbed and heavy-hearted from too much happiness? Is it possible to be too happy? He felt so miserable—was he sickening for any fever?

I am sick, I must die.
Lord ha' mercy on me!

The refrain made itself into a marching tune for his feet. It drew itself across his quivering mind, up and down, like a bow drawn across a stringed instrument. It moaned like a viola, darkening his thoughts as a viola darkens a passage for strings. He could not escape the repetition.

I am sick, I must die. . . .

"Menella!" he cried sharply, hammering on the door of their room in a sudden and horrible fright—"Menella!"

The door of their room flew open and Menella flew out.

Had he stumbled, tripped, hurt himself? Was he late? Why was he late? What was wrong? Was anything wrong?

"Oh, Jamie, are you tired? You look so tired. Have you the tickets? You shouldn't have bothered about the tickets. My dearest, if you're tired we won't go."

Menella was as normal and sweet as a crocus in spring in her yellow hoops and lavender petticoat: or, he thought, she was liker the flame of the candle on her dressing-table with its lavender heart in a golden radiance. She lifted up his heart in her two hands and warmed it and put it back in its proper place.

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Comforted thus by her cheerful welcome he was able to somersault, like the schoolboy he had so lately been, back into the moodless gaiety of yesterday. Indeed it was easier for him to laugh and be cheered than to explain to anxious Menella what had been the matter with him. He was too young, too unaccustomed to consider his own nature, to recognize in this onslaught of an uncomprehended moodiness the fatal sign of approaching Babyon maturity.

It was said, in his family, that the boys' hearts and the girls' tresses darkened as they grew up. But Babyon youth was gay: and a hunting accident had robbed Jamie of his chance of seeing the truth of the saying written in his father's face, of comprehending under what oppression of the spirit his mother had sunk. And so, when Menella questioned him, because he did not like to confess to her the strange misery of a moment nor tell her how his mother had come so suddenly into his head as a memory, a dining-room-portrait face, gay and frightened, because he would not admit that he had been assaulted by these fancies, and as much afraid of them as if he were once more a little boy sent to bed up dark staircases without a candle, he burst into boisterous, triumphant flourishes of his ticket and his timepiece in her face.

He talked and laughed and hurried himself and her into a state of real excitement, till they romped down the stairs at last, arm in arm, laughing when Menella's hoops embarrassed them at the turn of the steep stair, a Menella and Jamie afraid that the coach might start without them, remembering only just in time as they entered the inn parlour to be Sir James and Lady Babyon, preparing to set out fashionably late for the play.

"Are you sure you still care to go, my dear?"

"As you please, Sir James!"

"The first act is perhaps scarce worth your attention."

"At least 'twill pass the time."

"Oh, Madam, if you insist. . . ."

Madam, handed into her coach with a flourish, kept her dimpling countenance pretty well, but Jamie's laughter echoed round the inn yard.

But it got no flash of white teeth from the ready ostlers. The ostlers, as Menella pointed out to Jamie after they had driven away, were, for Italians, so odd, so stolid and mute.

"How strange it is, Jamie! I thought Italians were a gay people. They never smile at us. My little maid seems half afraid of me. I can scarcely get her to lace me. That reminds me, Jamie, this is the gown you chose. I have never put it on before. Jamie, do you like me in this gown?"

JAMIE'S answer lasted them the rest of the short journey. They were not late: the lobbies were still crowded with arrivals. Indeed there was a bustle, and yet they passed easily through the throng. Wherever they turned a lane opened in front of them and whispers followed. They went down the lane, royally indifferent, but within discomfited: and Menella's hand tightened on Jamie's arm.

"Jamie? Is it my dress? What have we done?"

Jamie had a lump in his throat that infuriated him. He, the welcomed charming boy, had never known open hostility before.

"Be quiet, my dear! It's nothing, Menella! I don't know. Yes, something's wrong. But it's nothing to do with us. How can it be? I'll settle you in our box and then I'll make inquiries. Something is wrong certainly. It may be bad news—the French—the Austrians—anything. Damn them, though, what has it to do with us?"

He hurried her into the gorgeous, chilly box and looked about him impatiently.

"Menella, it's icy cold in here. Keep your wraps on! Pish, what sort of a box is this?"

"It's the same box, Jamie, that we had before."

"Is it? So it is. But isn't it cold? Such a draught! These foreign theatres—never knew such a draught. Menella, do you want to stay?"

She looked at him in a mild astonishment.

"Dearest, we've just come."

"Oh yes, of course—yes, we're here now. But so chilly, the discomfort for you. If you would prefer to leave. . . ."

"My dear, would you prefer it?"

"No—no, no! Now we're here we'll stay. May as well stay. But I wish they'd begin."

He was uneasy. When he had settled Menella in her chair in correct fashion so that the brocaded curtains on her right should shelter her from the bold eyes of the house, he drew up the second of the box's three chairs. But he did not sit. He fidgeted, opening the box door to discover whence the cold stream of air was loosed upon them: rearranged his cloak, fumbled for his quizzing glass, broke the ribbon and needed Menella to retie it: and while she

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bent over the task, paused beside her, still standing looking down upon the packed hold of the theatre, much as, an hour earlier, he had looked down from the inn gallery upon the inn yard.

The house was certainly full. He was able to realise its fullness because he found himself facing, not rows of heads in profile, but pink, full-moon faces, open-mouthed Oes behind Oes, all staring to the side of the house in which their box was placed. For an instant he thought to himself that he had made a mistake, that he had brought Menella into one of the bachelor boxes upon the actual stage. That would have been enough to make his acquaintances stare. But no, he was in his proper box, at the side, in the middle gallery among the family boxes. It was the audience that had turned sideways in its seat. The audience puzzled him. It was even more talkative than common; but it was a whispered talkativeness.

Here and there a man sprang up gesticulating and was pulled down again. Unrestrained cries from the pit burst out of the muffled chatter, singly, like warnings against a danger. So definite was the concentration of all interest on something or someone in their immediate neighbourhood, whether below or above he could not tell, that involuntarily Jamie turned and looked upwards, craning his neck at the boxes above his head: and then swung sheer round to stare into his own alcove, and so back again, more puzzled than before. He could see nothing to excite the audience. For they were excited: it was unquestionable—excited beyond even his experience of an Italian crowd. And there was a hissing sinister note in the gabble that made Menella turn to him. She did not know the language, but the tone disturbed her.

"What is it, Jamie? What has happened? What are they afraid of? Oh, Jamie, it couldn't be fire?"

"My darling, absurd!"

"But what is it, Jamie? What are they all staring at?"

"I don't know, sweet! Nothing! They're only Italians. Sit quiet! See, the curtain's going up."

The overture had indeed played itself out unheard, adding to, but never mastering the general din, that unnerving din of massed humans all talking together and all in undertones. The sound was like the hiss of waves drawn backward down a beach. It was as if the whole audience were audibly sucking in its breath in preparation for an outburst. On that half lull the curtain lifted. As if the glare of light were a signal, the outburst came.

For as the actors began to play their parts a woman shrieked and, instantly, they were as unnoticed as tree boughs swaying up and down outside the closed window of a lighted room. The audience fed itself, strengthened itself on the blaze of sound and light; but it had no conscious ear or eye for the stage. Languid boxes gesticulated and muttered: the galleries yelled: while the whole arena, on the woman's cry, rose massively with a forward and upward movement, doubling its size and height.

"Birnam Wood, Menella!" cried Jamie hysterically. "Look, Menella, it's Birnam Wood!"

Menella sprang up and caught at his arm.

"Jamie, oh, Jamie," she cried, "don't you see? Look! It's us they want! It's us!"

AS SHE babbled a man came swarming along the gallery rail like a monkey and, swinging from the curtain, flung himself screaming over the edge of the box. He had a knife between his teeth: his face was puckered up with the effort of holding it. Behind him a second man craned forward, flinging phrases that Jamie caught and half understood at the terrified Menella. Jamie took the first man by the shoulders, forced him backwards over the rail, out, out and down, and let go. Then, while the mob below yelped like a pack of hounds diverted, he turned and sent his fist into the face of the second, the gibbering monkey's face. On that the roar sobered to the former dangerous half-quiet.

"Come on then, all of you!" roared Jamie into the lull. But as he tossed his defiance the door behind him was rattled open. Menella pulled his arm and he turned. The manager, who should have been away in the country, flung himself upon Jamie in a white perspiration of terror. His hands shook, his lips shook: never did such a frightened little man babble of private exits, mobs, friendship, evil eyes and a theatre wrecked. His fear pricked the bubble of Jamie's fury. Sobering, his arm about the sobbing Menella, he plunged after the twittering creature out into the dim corridor, and heard the smash of glass on the wall behind him as the door swung to, and the cat-calls swelling again, muffled by the shut door, into that inexplicable roar of anger and hate. In an-

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other moment they were in the street, in a side street whose look he did not know, and the door in the wall was slammed behind them.

Raging, bewildered, vowing vengeance, sucking his grazed knuckles, scared as any man may well be who faces, unwarned, the beast mob with a woman beside him, Jamie hurried Menella down the alley to the tune of "Why? why? why?" Both panting, and she weeping, they still babbled to each other, "Why?" Their situation was not pleasant; for the shock, the hurry, the sensation of being a quarry pursued, combined to rob Jamie of his sense of direction, and children and loafers were already gathering round them when wheels and the trot of horses came friendly to their ears. Jamie was preparing to stop the coach and entreat hospitality for his exhausted wife from whatever strangers were within; but the coach drew up of its own accord. It was their own. The coachman, calm enough and quite intelligible, had been directed by the theatre management to follow after the *signore* who had tired, so he was told, of the heat of the theatre, and was walking home.

Jamie bundled his wife into the coach and followed her himself.

But, white and overwrought as the adventure had left her, Menella could sit back and review the actual incidents of it with a philosophy that amazed as much as it suited Jamie. She was tearful because tears were Menella's way; but she was not angry with Italy. "Foreigners!" was Menella's explanation. She had not come abroad, she explained to him, without being prepared for any crazy thing that foreigners might do.

"I am not afraid of foreigners," concluded Menella, amazing him, and on that began to cry again with—"Oh, Jamie, I was so frightened!"

"But, darling, you said just now. . . ."

"Oh!" She turned to him with a look of actual horror that peaked her face into what she would be at sixty—"Jamie, it wasn't them. They're just Italians. It was the noise they made, so angry, so—mad. Jamie, it made me remember. . . ."

"What?" But he knew what she remembered.

"Hariot!"

"Don't, Menella! To drag in that now. What has she to do with us? We're in Italy. You're talking too foolishly, Menella! Talking of things like that when we've been in such danger! You don't seem to realise what happened. We might have been killed. That crowd was dangerous."

"Yes!" said Menella. "Mad! Mad as Hariot!"

He put his arm round her.

"Menella, what are you saying? You've been so brave. You mustn't get hysterical."

"They came at us," she sobbed, "like Hariot."

"You little fool! You're not to talk of her, I tell you, you little fool!" he raged, and saw that he frightened her, that she was in an instant more deeply and terribly frightened by the anger in his voice than she had been by the uproar of the angry theatre. She clutched at him, beseeching him wildly not to talk to her like that—please, please, Jamie, not to talk to her like that! So Jamie, furious with himself for his own outburst because he knew that it was the consequence of his own fright, said to himself that he was a husband now and that his wife was the weaker vessel: he must be firm but kind, very kind always to the weaker vessel. So he told her quickly how sorry he was and then held her tight in the jolting coach, deriving his own comfort from her clinging arms about his neck. Thus the two children comforted each other with wise saws and kisses and forgiveness interchanged, as they drove back to their lodging through the alien hostile town.

When they got home, they found Jabez waiting for them. Jabez had overtaken them at last. Jabez had washed and supped while they had been absent at the Opera: Jabez was ready to be in attendance upon his master when sent for.

His exhausted and dishevelled master was frankly thankful for the arrival of his aide.

"Send him up! *Faites monter!* What's the word they use?"

Jabez mounted. Jabez, with packets and apologies and a very grave face, presented himself before his young master and mistress. He hoped he had done right. The gentlemen, lawyer-like, wouldn't have two words about it, so there it was. They had travelled together and he had paid dues for both. The gentlemen had given him letters to say he should pay till they overtook Sir James. Should he come in, sir? He was outside.

"Who's outside, Jabez? How you beat about the bush! Who's with you?"

Jabez whistled to the shadows of the staircase. Jabez stood back to let a shadow in. Jabez was a traitor gone over to Menella's enemies. Jabez had brought with him —Dekker!

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Their instinct had not misled them. The pair had indeed been hunted from country to country and then from town to town; though not by Hariot's orders. It was not Hariot who had sent Dekker after them. Hariot had ceased to trouble herself about Jamie and Menella. Hariot was dead.

Dekker, exhibiting his obedience to former employers as a recommendation to a possible future master, told the story without disguises. He had been bidden watch and report. On the day that Sir James left The Wells he had, as Sir James would remember, delivered a packet—the man's eyes rested a moment on Menella's ringed hand. He had then seen Miss Traill—beg pardon, sir and madam—had seen Lady Babyon sitting in the coach. Returning to his mistress's lodgings he had told his mistress what he had seen. Miss Hariot had ordered her coach. He—he hesitated—he, knowing his mistress since she was a child, being trusted, had been so bold as to beg her to. . . .

"What?"

"Beg her to counter the order, sir! She, my mistress, was in no state to travel. Miss Traill—your pardon, your ladyship—her ladyship will bear me out that my mistress, when she was in her moods, was in no state to travel. It had come on her again, your ladyship!"

"It?" Jamie spoke in a strangled voice of horror.

"Her mood! Her ladyship can tell you: her ladyship has seen my mistress in her moods: her ladyship knows. . . ."

Menella knew. Menella was wringing her hands.

"Again, Dekker, again! And I not there!"

"What happened?" Jamie's mouth was hidden by his hand.

"My lady's maid and I, sir, we—we did what we thought best—being left alone and in charge as it were: old Madam Peacey was not even heeded by my mistress. In the end we persuaded her not to go."

Said Jamie nervously, incredulously—

"You—my cousin? How could you persuade my cousin?"

"We—I—the maid and I, sir, we held her till she was quiet. Then, sir, we barred the window and the doors and so left her, while I took upon me to send a post to London after you and another to my mistress's law people. I was gone some two hours. We thought it best to leave her."

"Alone?"

"The maid, sir, was afraid of my mistress, and old Madam Peacey was taken with the vapours: we did as we thought best. She was quiet enough before we left her to herself. We had barred the door."

He had been placed, it transpired, in Hariot's household by guardians. And, justifying their wisdom when his moment came, he had done all that was expected of him. But even Dekker could not be expected to foresee everything. Hariot, who so constantly spent her money on ladies' trifles, filigrees, fans, seals, rings, bodkins, had fancied one day the mother-of-pearl pattern on a lady's pistol in a jeweller's window. She and Menella had bought it together. It lay on her silver-table, a toy among toys: and, somewhere near midnight, Dekker thought, for he had been awakened out of his first sleep, Hariot had remembered her toy. There had been one shot, through the heart.

CHAPTER III

AN ARROW of sunlight stirred the Babyons' room like a spoken word.

"Jamie!" said Menella timidly.

She had spoken to him thus at intervals throughout the remnant of the night. Dekker had told his tale and Jabez had received his orders, and the two had then been dismissed by a quiet-voiced, collected Jamie who spoke to be obeyed, without lifting eyelids to look at his obedient servants. Jabez was to take order for their departure at the earliest possible hour: and when Dekker, coughing, insinuated that devoted servants had had little enough sleep these three nights, Dekker's protest was brushed aside. Awake or asleep, Sir James Babyon, his lady, and his people, were to start for England at eight that morning. Jabez and Dekker left Jabez to sleep and be ready for the journey—Dekker to roam the town for gossip.

"Jamie!" said Menella again.

She had been pattering to and fro between parlour and bedroom all night, light-footed, gathering up their possessions. She had accepted without a thought of objection the abrupt termination of their honeymoon wanderings. Indeed, with the coming of their news, she had ceased, though she was too simple to realise it, to be a bride. In an instant she had become the wife, the unconsidered pivot, the negligible necessity of her husband's existence. Ribbons might flutter, soft colour rise, tears well up so easily, and a poor lady splash her shoe with common mud, but Jamie—James—Sir James Babyon

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would never again be in a passion over such matters. Spring was ended and all the blossoms fallen. This she knew as she watched her husband sitting at the table, his head in his hands, needing her, depending on her, oblivious of her. Menella, a finger on her lip, pressing back the expression of her love for him, watched him in his misery and, watching, learned her lesson.

"Jamie!" breathed Menella again. Then, in the flat silence—"I'd better pack," whispered Menella: and so came to her wifehood.

But in the morning, her saving duties done, on aching feet, with an aching heart, she returned to him again.

He had scarcely stirred, but sat still at the huge, solid, round mahogany table, twisting and twiddling the tasselled ribbon of the ornate mat that lay upon it. His fresh high colour could not easily leave his cheeks: his hair, for he had not assumed his wig, was still crisped and bright: young and yellow-haired he could be unshaven a night and still not be noticeably ungroomed. Menella therefore, her fingers tentative on the table as she bent across it to him and looked down on the drooped head and shoulders, saw him so far unchanged. Said Menella then hopefully—

"Jamie! Jamie, did you fall asleep?"

"Asleep!"

He lifted his head at that, and she saw his face at last and scarcely knew it. His eyes, those clear light blue eyes, were sunk in his head and the irids had shrunk to mere grey rings about the enlarged pupils. The change had altered him shockingly. If she felt herself a new Menella, a saddened wise Menella, here, with darkened eyes, eyes of a beast that suffers and cannot tell what it suffers, was also a new Jamie. She gave, at the sight of this new, dreadful Jamie, a little wordless cry of pity and dismay that he ignored. They stood then looking at each other, she not knowing what to say, he not caring what he said; but at last he caught up his own word with a vague—

"Asleep? No, I wasn't asleep." There was not even irony in his tone.

She didn't know what to do for him. She was afraid to kiss him or touch him, lest an assumption of intimacy should offend his misery. She faltered at last—

"I've packed."

"Yes," said Jamie.

They paused again: and this time his eyes meeting hers did not waver aside again. Indeed, he met her look, purposefully, with a hard exaggeration of indifference: she on her side would not budge. At last he defied her with—

"What are you looking at me for?"

"Jamie!" she besought him. But he still stared her down with hard bold eyes.

"Look as much as you like!" said Jamie. "You've got to live with it."

"Jamie, with what?"

"The mark on my forehead. Isn't it the mark you're looking for? Well, you're my wife: you've got a right to look at it. Look at it! See what you've got to live with! Look!"

He sprang to his feet and caught up the tall candlesticks on the mantel. The tapers were burnt down to flat pools of wax and flamed and shook in his grasp like torches at the moment of extinction. He came reeling towards her, the candles held high above him, crying—

"Look! Look at it! Look!"

She ran to him.

"At what, my dear?"

"Cain!" said Jamie. Suddenly his lip began to quiver.

LITTLE Menella reached up on tiptoes and took the lights from his outstretched hands and put them down carefully on the table out of the way. Then, still with the curious methodical quiet that had descended upon her, she took her husband by the hand, and led him to the couch behind the table. Sitting down she pulled him down to her, pulled the dear head to her shoulder.

"You're so tired: you're worn out," said Menella to Jamie.

He muttered "Cain! Cain!" and with that began to cry, his hands clutching her shoulders, his face buried in the laces of her dress.

She said nothing for she could think of nothing comforting to say; but she held him tightly, held him, so much had life reversed their relationship in an hour, much as he earlier in the night had supported her in the moving coach. So time passed in a desolate silence until, looking down at him, heavy on her breast, she found that he had fallen asleep. She sat as still as a mouse, afraid to wake him from that merciful exhaustion, till Jabez, knocking at the door, reported breakfast and the coach both ready.

They dressed and ate in haste, paid their dues, entered their conveyance and drove away. Jabez and Dekker on horseback clattered after them.

Menella, watching the mulberry trees

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slide past them, and villages planted like button mushrooms on a chequered grey-green tablecloth slowly swell to human size and dwindle again, first to dolls' farms, then to white dots, and turning from that interminable regularity to Jamie listless in his corner, thought: We hurry so: we're still being hurried and chased; but what hurry is there now? She's dead: she can't pursue us now. And because the thought comforted her she ventured on words—

"Jamie, don't grieve so! We can't help Hariot by grieving."

He turned on her his threatened look of a child in the dark—

"Hariot? If I'd known—if I'd understood—I could have helped Hariot," said Jamie. "But who'll help me?" And then, rousing—"There's only one person can help me."

Menella breathed a "Who?"

"Hariot could help me," said Jamie. He gave her a light, mad glance. His eye said, "You think I'm crazy; but I'm not crazy."

But poor Hariot," began Menella—"poor Hariot's dead."

"What of it?" said Jamie. He leaned forward: he became voluble—"Death doesn't matter," he reasoned, explaining simple matters to the little fool Menella: "Death! Death's a door that opens one way. I can see it opening, just a door with a latch. The latch drops and it's open! If I dropped the latch," mused Jamie, while Menella watched him fearfully, "I could go through it, you see, to Hariot. I could explain things to her. I didn't know what she was driving at, you see, Menella! I didn't understand at all. I ought to go. But I can't go. If I did go, could I get back? I'd be shut out. That's what would happen to me. It's terrible, Menella, to be shut out, outside the house"—his speech slackened and stumbled like the words of one who repeats a half-forgotten lesson—"the house—of—life. You see, Menella. . . ."

But Menella was terrified by his look of a reasoning, finger-wagging, drunken man. She whimpered—

"Don't, Jamie. Don't! You're frightening me."

"I?" The taut, schooled look faded from the boy's face. Jamie stirred in his corner. His eye lightened, his glance grew gentle. It was as if Jamie were awakened, thought Menella, from nightmare. More, he was looking at her, concerned for her, was taking her hand, pressing it—"Frightened? My dearest! What's frightened you? Of course, you're thinking of yesterday: yes, yes, of course! It was alarming indeed—foreign rabble! I wish I'd had time to investigate. But we had to be off, you see. You do see, don't you, that it's mere decency to hurry home? Poor Cousin Hariot! Menella—" He leant to her earnestly, confiding his thoughts. "I've a terrible fear that I'm in part responsible for Hariot's—for the rash act. I should have realised her state of mind. I shall have no peace till I get home and see the physicians and my guardian—her guardian too, you know, and the old lady, Peacey. I can't cross-question Dekker. It's questionless that my cousin was mad. And yet I have a feeling—guilty—responsible. We *were* contracted. Don't you understand me, Menella?"

So he talked on. And Menella, who lived for the moment, rejoiced in this return of Jamie, sobered, yet her own again: and put out of her mind the anguish of the past night and the passing hour: tried to forget the words, the manner, the look—above all the look—that had frightened her. It was necessary that she should forget the look. She had never before seen a likeness between her fair husband and his dark cousin. But Jamie, shrunk into a corner, staring at her with shining eyes and mouthing death and horror, had been for a moment unmistakably Hariot's cousin!

THEY encountered no difficulties in the days that followed. France had stared after them as they drove south and Italy had openly and inexplicably resented their presence within her borders; but no sooner did they set their faces for home than all went well with them. The inn-keepers welcomed them: the grooms and chambermaids were willing. All Savoy and France seemed to conspire to speed them on their way with—was it possible?—a sigh of relief.

It was the unobservant Menella who noticed and worded that sigh of relief.

"Jamie," said she as, the Channel crossing behind them, they drove through the familiar lanes of Kent, greeting the whitened hedges with passion, exchanging once and for all the maize and mulberries and spires of Italy for poppies, convolvulus, village square-towered churches and the straw-garlanded damson trees of blessed, dearest England. "Jamie, I'm glad to be home. They didn't like us, did they, abroad? They treated us so oddly, not as we treat strangers. No, they didn't think us comical. It looked to me as if they were afraid of us. It was as if—do you under-

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stand me, Jamie?—as if we were plague-struck. And they such dirty people!"

Jamie shifted in his seat, sighing heavily.

"What's that? You're fanciful, Menella!"

"No, I'm sure I'm not. I'll tell you why."

"Well?" He was scarcely listening. Leaning his arm on the ledge below the coach window, shelving his cheek on his arm, he stared out at the sun-browned happy country. It seemed to her that nowadays he was but half awake, and that even the wakeful half of him grew daily more silent. And Menella, fearing his silence, following her instinct to capture on any or no pretext his attention, had grown daily more garrulous and been less heeded.

"Jamie, it's Dekker who's frightened now. D'you notice how he keeps away, hangs behind, canters on ahead? Now once—now in the old days—now when I lived with. . . ." She broke off, moistened her dry lips, began again. "At Turnbridge Wells, before I knew you, it was I who was frightened by Dekker. He used to—it's past, Jamie, don't get angry!—he used to presume upon his place: he was always at my elbow. He used to smile—oh, that smile! He knew he had a right in the house and I was a charity creature. Hariot never helped me against Dekker: never would see. Jamie, are you listening?"

"I'm listening." Jamie spoke without turning, without interest. "I'm sorry, Menella! It was necessary to bring Dekker back with us. I need him in town at the lawyer's. Then he'll be paid off, of course, pensioned and sent about his business." Then, as if dimly aware that something was expected of him that he had not given—"You shan't be troubled with the sight of him much longer, dear, Menella dear!"

She was quick to protest at this interpretation of her story.

"I? It's not I. All that ended for me—all my troubles ended for me when you came. Poor Dekker, how can he harm me? No, no, Jamie, it's Dekker who's afraid. Watch him! He's like those Italian servants. Yesterday when he served us at supper his teeth were chattering. He looks at us so strangely. It's not Dekker, it's his fright that frightens me."

"You're crazy!" Jamie was incredibly roused, unreasonably annoyed. "I tell you what it is—the man's been drinking. I guessed it before. The man drinks. My God, and my cousin in his charge! But—afraid of us! You're dreaming, Menella!"

Menella was stubborn.

"Watch him! He doesn't help Jabez to wait on us unless Jabez calls him. I heard Jabez rate him for it. He keeps out of our way. Don't you feel it, his fear? What is it, Jamie? What's amiss with us? Oh, Jamie, what are you going to do?"

For Jamie, plunged half out of the window, was stopping the coach. Jamie, halloing, brought Jabez galloping up for orders.

"Yes, sir! The noon meal, sir? In the lacquer case! At once, sir! I'll get it out at once."

"Where's your fellow?"

"Dekker, sir? On ahead."

"Fetch him back! I pay his dues: let him earn his keep, do his duty, be at hand!"

Dekker was very far ahead. Dekker, overtaken by Jabez, returned slowly, dismounted slowly, approached slowly.

"Dekker, get the luncheon box out of the hold. Your mistress and I will rest and eat."

"Jabez. . . ." began Dekker.

"Jabez minds the horses. Spread the cloth. Get out the dishes!"

"Here, sir? In the chariot?"

"In the chariot. What's wrong with you? Why not in the chariot?" And then, still more angrily—"Jabez!"

"Sir?"

"Is the man bewitched?"

For Dekker had made no motion to obey. He stood, a greenish-faced, stricken creature, and goggled.

"Come on, brother!" Jabez admonished him in an undertone. "The quality's waiting." And deftly pulling out the japanned five-sided luncheon case, he whipped out of the coach pocket the dining-cloth of Milan silk, shook it open and spread it with a flourish. Jamie watched him with exact attention: and Menella, shrinking on his arm, held there by his unconscious pressure of her against his body, felt him still quivering with anger. He spoke—

"Go to the horses, Jabez! Dekker may do this work."

That Jabez was unwilling to leave his fellow-servant to his own devices was plain. He hesitated, on the edge of speech.

"D'you hear me?" cried Jamie, stamping his foot: and, for the first time in Menella's hearing, swore at his man.

Jabez, now much shaken, retreated.

But Dekker, unaccustomed to a furious Jamie, was half cowed, half spurred into a fumbling haste of obedience. He wrenched open the delicately moulded luncheon box so roughly that Menella gave a little scream of protest, and lifted out the close-packed lacquer trays with hands that jolted the china ware. He ranged the trays

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hastily side by side, and diving again into the box brought up and balanced hastily on the lid itself three of the Murano glasses that were Menella's pride.

On that Jamie cried out in a fume—

"Are you still drunk? Why do you lay three places?"

The goaded Dekker straightened himself. Menella had been long enough his fellow-servant to shrink before her knowledge of an imminent outpouring of abuse. But the words were not spoken, were visibly gulped down.

"Begging your pardon, sir. . . ." began Dekker, and broke off with a gasp. A glass, overbalanced by his backward start, rolled to the cushion's edge, dropped over it and smashed on the coach floor. The man took no heed: his face was paper-white, his mouth open: his gross lips shook.

"Look! Look behind you!" bellowed Dekker. He flung up his arms and, screening his head in them, charged down the empty road as one who seeks safety through the very flames. Before Jamie and Menella could recover from their own startled turn and stare at the innocent field behind them, poppy-splashed, Dekker had blundered into Jabez, tore the bridle from his hand, leaped on to his own saddle-horse and spurred off. The chalk dust rose in clouds behind him from the roadway, dulling the sight and sound of his passage, and before it could settle he had reached the turn of the road and vanished behind the hedge.

DRUNK—that was the explanation! The delirious outburst of a drink-sodden fool. By the time they had reached town and were settled in their lodgings in Panton Street, Jamie had made up his mind that no other explanation was possible. What other could there be? Mad-drunk or —or what? Or what, Menella? There was no other explanation. If repetition meant conviction then Jamie was convinced that there was no other explanation.

Jabez, called into respectful consultation, while Menella ate the lunch alone in the coach, thought so too: offered evidence which the coachman would, on appeal, confirm. Dekker had certainly been drunk.

"Jabez—" Jamie beat at the knap-weed with his cane till a dozen purple heads lay on the roadside dust like splashes of wine on a napkin. "Jabez, what set him running? Did you hear him call out 'Look behind you!'? Did you hear?"

Jabez was voluble: more voluble in the next five minutes than he had been for days, than he had been, indeed, since that sleepless morning when he had gossiped with the Milan hucksters and come back thoughtful—

"Sir, it's the country trick. You know it—touch and run—we've played it on each other: remember it, Master Jamie? He called 'Look behind you!' and you looked. That gave him time to run."

"Why should he run, Jabez?"

"Sir, it was the brandy: he had the horrors. When a man's that far gone God knows what he thinks he sees." Jabez mopped at his hot face.

"Ah!" Jamie regarded him thoughtfully: and then—"That'll do, Jabez!" and with that returned to the coach. Menella looked her questions as the journey was resumed, but got no word from Jamie. It was not until they reached London and were driving up Piccadilly that, looking out, he spoke.

"Do you know where we are, Menella?"

Menella shook her head.

Said Jamie—

"We were here not so long ago."

"Jamie!" She began to smile, for now she recognised s t r e e t and buildings: "Weren't we married here, Jamie?"

"Hereabouts. Here we thought to be happy. Till death us do part—eh? Death's parted us already, eh, Menella? Eh? Say something, Menella! Can't you speak?"

She could not. She had nothing to say. It was not in her temperament to feel the blow as he felt it. Hariot was dead and it was very sad: so far she was with him. But his horror at his cousin's death she could not understand. Hariot had killed herself because Jamie had not married her. Yes, but Hariot was mad. Mad people did mad, shocking things.

What fault was it of Jamie's? Yet he went about with a white face and lowered eyes: and that he should do so was calamity. Here was the real blow: it seemed to Menella that Hariot, dead, was robbing her of Jamie, as she, living, had robbed Hariot: and so she hated Hariot's memory: and loved Jamie the more because he disregarded her. But her real suffering came from the fact that she could not understand why he disregarded her. Why had he changed? Why did he suffer so? She knew that he loved her and had never loved Hariot. Yet he suffered because of Hariot.

It was incomprehensible to Menella. Yet she was acutely, agonisingly conscious of adding to his suffering by the mere fact that she could not understand it.

"Say something, Menella!"

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She could have torn her heart out for him, resolutely, with the two small hands that he had so often kissed; but she could not say anything to help him because she did not know what to say. She only knew, it was her cross to know, that she could not help him because she could not force her nature into intellectual comprehension of his.

"What's the good of loving? Anybody can love!" cried Menella to herself. "But oh, if I could be wise!" and so watched him in a stubborn, speechless torment.

In Menella's nightmares she ran down a staircase to escape a pursuer, faster and faster, till, a half flight from the bottom, she jumped: but she never landed. No sooner did she spring than the stairway would string out down the side of an incredible precipice, and she would fall, fall, fall, to wake in a sweat before ever she reached the ever-receding bottom.

In such a nightmare she now lived by day. She saw Jamie separated from her by a step or two; but when she tried to o'erleap it the distance was enlarged, and would continue to be enlarged as she realized, by every incident of their mutual life. For when she went with him next day to visit the family lawyer and guardian of both the cousins, she was bewildered anew and distressed anew by Jamie's reception of what was not, after all, such terrible news, come to think of it. For Mr. Laramie, giving no more details than Jamie knew already of Hariot's death and burial, was prepared to put aside the matter quickly, as a finished and bygone family mischance, and to turn to another matter more cheerful arising out of it. Indeed he had such a comforting air, when he referred to Hariot, of implying that tragedies would happen, especially to women, in spite of all that guardians might do: and he seemed so far from implying that Jamie could possibly be supposed to have anything to reproach himself with, that Menella thought him kind and liked him. But Jamie broke in roughly, gave him almost the lie—

"It won't do, sir!" said Jamie: "I was contracted to my cousin and I married another woman. Don't gloze it!"

"If ever"—the ancient gentleman was solemn—"if ever events justified a technical breach—you were very young, Sir James. . . ."

"Three weeks younger than I am now," said Jamie.

"Ah, but I speak of the time when the arrangement was made. Eighteen—tut-tut—too young. I protested at that time, I remember; but I was overruled."

"But you drew up the contract," Jamie mocked him.

"I considered, young gentleman, that you were a penniless younger son."

"Hark ye now," said Jamie, "did you know when you contracted us that my cousin was mad?"

"Mistress Hariot Babyon"—Mr. Laramie turned to Menella as to the point of sanity in a world of Babyons—"inherited her father's wealth, though she could not inherit the title. It was a fine match for a younger son."

"You did know then?" Jamie raised a clenched hand.

"Jamie!" Menella caught it back: then —"My husband's not himself," she stammered: "we've been travelling night and day since the news came. . . ."

JAMIE laughed harshly, but he let his hand lie in hers.

"He knows me, Menella! Don't you, sir? Besides he'll make allowance for a man who's a bridegroom and a murderer all in a night."

"I beseech you, Jamie. . . ."

"It's you he'll not forgive, Menella! You've lost the family a fortune."

The lawyer struck in with a smile and a wave of a hand that obliterated wild sayings.

"Not lost. . . ."

"What's that?" Jamie shrank a little as if he felt the wind of a hand raised for a blow.

"Miss Hariot Babyon, in a will found in her room on the—er—unhappy night. . . ."

Jamie sneered at him.

"You talk, sir, of our wedding night."

"Give me leave! It is the only pleasant news in a sad business. I am with you there, Sir James, a sad, sad business. But this remains. She has bequeathed to you and to your heirs her entire fortune. It's a matter of half a million—more—I have the figures somewhere. . . ."

Jamie sprang up: his face was convulsed: he gesticulated like a man beating off not a wind but a rain of blows.

"You can't burden me with that! I'll dispute it. It's not legal. Why, the woman was mad!"

"The will might, of course, be disputed, were it worth any one's while. But in that case you would still inherit. Grant that she died intestate, you are still next of kin."

The boy burst into a shout of laughter.

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"God rot her, Menella! She gives us a wedding present!"

He collapsed into a chair and, putting back his head, laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks. The lawyer was shocked at last.

"If you cannot consider your wife, sir, decency to the dead. . . ." He broke off.

"Well, what is it?" Jamie wiped his eyes. Mr. Laramie had half risen.

"I—I fancy—at the door—my clerk perhaps?" But the old gentleman was oddly perturbed.

"Call him in!" permitted Jamie. "Let him join us in our entertainment!"

His guardian hesitated. Then—

"No, it can't be Lacy. I sent him out. I hope no eavesdropper. . . ."

Jamie lifted himself out of his chair and strolled to the door, while Menella, glad of the interruption, with her cambric handkerchief patted her face into calmness. Their host, however, watched the door.

"Pray come in!" said Jamie, in that boisterous new voice of his that filled the little parlour and re-echoed from the panelling. He flung open the door.

But the passage, well-lighted by the delicate, fan-shaped skylight, was empty. He let in only the draught, that icy, musty draught inseparable, as their host nervously explained, from a basement London house. Their host was apologetic; for Menella flinched in the cold air and drew her flimsy wraps about her. Jamie mocked her harshly for a feminine wisp and swore that he felt nothing. But the lawyer, with hands and voice shaken a little, for old age feels a sudden draught, agreed with her and shivered with her, and pished at himself for fancying a knock and a caller for nothing, and so letting in on them the draught.

And with his apologies their conference broke up sooner than Menella or Jamie had planned; but Mr. Laramie, it seemed, had an engagement so soon as made no matter. His clerk was out. It would therefore be better perhaps to put all papers in order ready for signature, and give himself the pleasure of waiting on Sir James with them in a day or two. There were minor legacies to be paid over—and the largish one, for example, to Dekker.

Dekker? Oh, yes, he was in touch with Dekker. Yes, yes, the rogue had crawled in on him that morning, sober and penitent. "Indeed, Sir James, I know not what possessed Dekker. Yes, indeed, he told me. Unheard-of conduct. Yet I know him for a most reputable and trustworthy fellow."

"Did he explain himself?" Jamie wanted to know.

"Explain? Why, yes, in a measure. But the motions, my dear sir, if madam here will forgive me, of a man in his cups. . . . But we can discuss these minor matters more easily when my clerk is at my elbow—Lacy—you remember poor Lacy, Sir James? Well then, for a week or two, I understand, I find you in Panton Street? Take care of the step—her ladyship must take care that she does not slip at the step."

BUT when Sir James was inquired for at Panton Street a day or so later, Sir James and his lady had left town, left for their country seat.

"Let's go home, Menella!" said poor Jamie. She thought of him now as poor Jamie. "Let's go home to The Court. Perhaps when we get home, Menella. . . ."

"Jamie," she cried desperately, "can't you put it behind you?"

"It?" He challenged her to use the name: and summoning her courage she used it.

"Hariot."

"What, is she in front of me now?" said Jamie, staring.

"Don't joke, Jamie! Please, please! Be wise! Look!" And then as he gave an odd start—"Don't, Jamie! I mean, listen! Jamie, it's not kind to me. You promised always to be kind to me. It's not kind not to listen. Listen! Look at me! This money—there's no reason that it should burden you so. Think that it's not for you—think that it's for. . . ."

"Well, Menella?"

"Jamie. . . ."

"I'm listening."

"Children, Jamie—when they come."

"Cain's brats."

"Oh, you're wicked to say such things," she lamented.

"It's you who are wicked, Menella, to think of handing on a curse."

"Money's not a curse. I've been poor all my life. I tell you, money's a blessing. It buys. . . ."

"Does it buy peace?"

Menella tried again.

"Forget the money's there. Let it lie for those—for those that come after us. And you, Jamie, you've to forget all that's past and think of me and think of what may come. I can give you peace, my Jamie, my poor Jamie, if you'll let me. Let me tell you what to do!"

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As always after a sudden bitter word, as if he would disclaim it by docility, he gave her a smile.

"Tell me what to do then, Menella! I like to do what you want. I used to think of nothing else but 'What does Menella want?' Here! I'd forgotten." He fumbled at a pocket. "I bought you this in Milan, the day—before Dekker came and we knew. It's lain by in my pocket. Open it! Isn't it pretty? A necklace for you; a daisy-chain filigree—little silver daisies with golden hearts, because they looked so like you, darling Menella! I looked forward to seeing you open it. Oh, I was so happy! How was I to know that Hariot—that Hariot. . . ."

"How could you know? Who could know? You did what was right, Jamie! Forget her! Forget!"

"Oh, Menella, can't we escape it—go somewhere—anywhere? Menella, let's go home!"

Thus it was, without warning given, giving no chance to the village to prepare its garlands, its speeches, its welcome home to the young squire married and his bride, that Sir James Babyon brought his lady home to Babyon Court.

Menella, weary from interminable traveling, anxiously occupied with Jamie and his new fit of listless docility, let Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset and Devon slide by her like coloured ghosts. But when, late on the third day, they reached a moorland of young heather, drove across an attic of the world through a wind that drove away melancholy, Menella felt a warmth rise in her cheek: and Jamie roused himself and his eye brightened.

He began to tell her what this hill and that house nestled under it had for name: to explain the difference between the green ling and the bell heather that, in another month, would be crimsoning the upland plain. The straight road dropped at last into clumped, carved woods. The coach drove, always dropping, for a good three miles up one aisle and down another—it was like desecrating a cathedral—till the road came out with a flourish on to a broad lawn edged with shrubberies, and drew up before wide steps, grey walls and a pillared front door. Menella, stepping from the coach, stiff and swaying with fatigue, looked up at the beautiful, sober, four-square house and knew it for a friend.

AND indeed she needed a friend and helper: for Jamie, as if he had used up his last energy in aching himself home, was fallen into a lethargy that made her long for any outburst of rage, anger or despair, rather than watch him obey her with the fretful docility of an exhausted child. He was at home, yet still homesick. He wandered restlessly about the house and gardens, scarcely speaking, yet uneasy if she were long out of his sight.

Sometimes, so low had his disease of conscience brought him, he held her hand and walked her, hour after hour, up and down the long formal paths, the weak tears running down his cheeks, while she, poor soul, wept with him and for him. Jabez, watching them from behind the close-clipped yew hedges, thought that they went about like two children, punished they could not tell why. But Jabez, the travelled country youth, thought that he knew why. He had listened to Dekker when Dekker mumbled to the brandy.

But though he trusted Dekker drunk, he meant to see for himself that what Dekker said was true: so far he had seen nothing but his master and his mistress grieving together. So Jabez, the gamekeeper's son, followed his quarry up and down, to and fro between the yew hedges, to see before he spoke. For Jabez was nursing a resolve to speak. "Didn't my mother nurse him?" said Jabez to his sweetheart. "He's got no kindred to call round him, and Lady Babyon, bless her pretty dolly face! what does she know of how blood works back in the Babyons. But I'm his foster-brother." Thus Jabez.

Meanwhile, as the months went by, the pretty dolly face did its best for Jamie Babyon, wept with him, smiled with him, and racked the anxious brain behind the milk and roses in the effort to devise distractions for him. The little brain could only think of childish ones, being itself but eighteen years in the world; but worse might have been found by wise wits. Menella had to be shown every drawer of the tall cabinets that Jamie's grandfather, the ambassador, had filled with foreign spoils: then she had to be told the tale of the building of the house.

They pored over Wren's actual plans together, and she was shown the bare, scarred, unfinished wall, left to incite a richer generation when the money failed Sir Jacoby, his great-grandfather: and she was taken to see the little hill of piled decaying stone in a clearing of the wood, brought with much expense to Babyon Court and never used. By questioning she extracted from The Court's owner stories, too, of the place; but he told them joy-

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lessly and was silent again when she let him be silent. Once, it was in the second month of their stay, he took her from room to room, up the stairs and down, to name for her the portraits that hung round the walls: and woke, for a moment, from his apathy under Menella's feverish interest; for Jamie was proud of the house and the name. She had him telling her at last that he would see to it that she too should have her portrait hanging among the Lady Babyons, a little fair interloper among the dark women.

"I'm the first Babyon to marry sunshine," said Jamie, elaborating the ghost of a compliment.

Menella, still laughing at it, strayed down the main stairs and, opening a door on the half-landing, called back into the darkness—

"What room is this, Jamie? You haven't shown me this room."

"Don't go in!" said Jamie quickly.

But she was in already and Jamie, following her, said listlessly—

"Why not, after all? This was my room before my brothers died. But I had meant to lock the door."

There was a small four-poster, a couple of Charles II chairs, straight-backed and uncomfortable, a chest and mirror, and comical adornments—a stuffed badger, a string of egg-shells—to prove it once a youngster's bedroom; while a row of little leather-bound books, a wigblock and a stand of canes hinted that here Jamie had grown into James. Menella looked at it, loved the little room, and laughed and teased Jamie at sight of the birds' eggs: and then at another sight, stopped laughing. Jamie's eye followed her stare. By the fireplace, opposite the bed, within a gilded frame, Hariot looked out at them, smiling.

"She gave it to me," said Jamie dully. "It's by Mr. Hogarth."

"I know. I was there when it was painted. May I have it?" said Menella sharply.

"What do you want with it?"

"I'll burn it."

"You can't!" said Jamie. "It's one of the family portraits."

"I'll put it away then. We can't have it hanging here, Jamie, in our house."

"What's the use? You can't put her away," said Jamie, and shambled out.

Menella ran down the stairs after Jamie, who had gone into the garden, humming a little tune. It would fade, this business of Hariot's death: it would become no more, she foresaw, than a picture hung on a wall of a forgotten chamber of their minds.

CHAPTER IV

JABEZ was with Jamie when she reached him.

"Talk to your mistress!" said Jamie vaguely, as Menella came up. "I can't settle things, Jabez!" and shambled off again down the garden path, which ended at a terrace and a balcony of stone some fifty yards long. The balcony was adorned at intervals by stone urns, out of which the geraniums of hot western England foamed in rose and green cascades. Beyond was pure sky. It was not until a visitor moved down to it, as Jamie was moving, that the immense panorama that lay under the sky, beyond and below the terrace, was revealed. For the balcony crowned an abyss cut uncountable years before by the brisk shallow river that tinkled, diminished by distance to the breadth of a footpath, round its base and on, dodging and twisting, down the valley to the visible pale ocean ten miles away.

The thatched buildings of a farmhouse lay directly under the garden, and across the thread of water the broad valley, a crazy quilt, parti-coloured like Menella's ring, billowed and dropped into hillocks, mounds, swells, dips and lesser valleys, until it rolled up again on the left to a dark blue hill, with a white speck of village atop lying level with the garden of Babyon Court.

Jamie, gazing, swung round from hill to sea and so to the toy farm at his feet. The drop was a dizzy one. . . .

"Over and down!" said a voice in his ear. "It's silent where I am, outside."

He reeled where he stood, or rather, the hills and valleys rose and danced about him, a stiff, still Jamie.

"I've been following you, Jamie! You carry me with you wherever you go. Better come to me, Jamie, where it's quiet. Jump, Jamie! Over and down!"

He looked over and down, dizzily.

"Jamie!" cried Menella's voice, grey, far away, but clear—"Come here to me!"

The world steadied. He put up his hand to brush aside a dead leaf that had blown against his cheek, as he turned his back on the depths and came obediently up the long walk to his wife.

Meanwhile, Menella and Jabez had had their talk.

"Jabez, I'm afraid your master's ill."

"I know, my lady! Ever since—" He hesi-

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tated: he would not look at her as he brought out his fact at last. "It's ever since that night at Milan."

"But you weren't with us," began Menella, as the lights and the noise and the fear of that night surged over her once more.

"Oh, my lady, they talked at the inn." He fidgeted his foot on the gravel. "My lady, the talk spread: it's travelled with us: it's not me, that I'll swear."

"What is spreading, Jabez? What do you mean?"

"They're just afraid, my lady! It's the maids: they vow they won't stay. Oh, my lady, my lady, it's what they think they see!"

Menella swayed on that: put back her hand to the stone seat behind her for support. It was then that she raised her voice in a call—

"Jamie, come here to me!"

But as Jamie turned and came to them down the path, Jabez, all respect forgotten, caught at her gown—

"There, my lady! There! There!"

"What? Where?"

"Oh, my lady, haven't you your eyes?"

"What are you pointing at, Jabez?"

He muttered—

"Dekker was right."

Menella saw that the man was trembling all over, and she trembled with him, for she had Jamie's cry in her ears again—"Cain! Cain!" and she stared at her husband, searching his smooth brow for a mark that he and others saw there. Mark or no mark, what did it matter to her! But on his forehead there was no mark: only the frown that aged him. He came up with—

"Well, what is it, Menella?"

"Jabez has something to tell us."

"Those Italians, sir, you know they're a crazy lot: they had a notion, a talk of the evil eye."

"And what's that?" said Menella, out of her depth.

But Jamie said slowly—

"The evil eye! It accounts for things. You've told me what I might have known." He laughed. "And is that all, my dear, at the back of his much ado? I've got the evil eye, have I? Why, I knew that. If that's all. . . ."

"Go on!" said Menella hoarsely to Jabez, stamping her foot.

"Not all, sir! It's followed you."

"It?"

"The story. The maids here, at The Court, let alone the village. . . ."

"Well?"

"Oh, sir, they're afraid. . . ."

"Of me? My own people?" Jamie flushed.

"Not of you, sir." Jabez was unaccountably moved. "Never of you."

"Tell me what you know or guess or think you know!" Jamie said.

"I daren't, sir! I can't, sir! But there's one who could. Sir, you never questioned Dekker. He'll tell you what your own people can't, sir!"

"Dekker?" Jamie turned to Menella. She recognized the ominous rising inflection of his voice. "D'you think now—did Hariot send Dekker?" He was beginning to pant.

"Hariot's dead, Jamie!" said Menella.

"Dead, is she? So much the more I must talk to Dekker. Laramie pays his pension. Laramie knows where he lodges. Yes, yes, wasn't Laramie to visit us in Panton Street? Then why did we come away, Menella, with none of our business done? We must go back to London, Menella! I should have talked to Dekker before now. He saw the last of Hariot. I'll go to-night. I'll go now. Menella, will you come with me?"

"To-morrow, dearest!"

"Now! I can't stay here. The garden's full of smoke, I tell you—smoke and voices. Jabez, order the coach! You're to ride with us, Jabez! You've hit it, Jabez, Dekker has the key to it all. In half an hour, Jabez! And, Jabez, tell your lady's maid as you go to the stables to make all ready."

HE WATCHED Jabez' departure, lowering.

"The evil eye, eh? But suppose it's all a cheat!"

"What!" cried Menella.

Jamie eyed her cunningly—

"Dekker saw her dead, quotha! Did he, though? She may be alive, Menella! Menella, I tell you I hear her voice just now. Dekker—Dekker—I should have talked to Dekker. He plots. Yes, yes, you warned me against him, Menella! What's his game? Hand and glove with Hariot, wasn't he? So Dekker, maybe, set them on to hound us at Milan. Did Dekker tell them I was marked? No, they'd see that for themselves. Or can't they? It ought to be a mark, Menella, not to be mistaken, then they'd know. Then I shouldn't be bothered. Then they'd not pry and whisper. But then, why did Dekker run away, Menella? I'll know everything if I know why Dekker ran away. If Hariot were alive, then, maybe, I needn't go over the cliff."

Menella whispered, because her voice failed her—

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"Jamie, what do you mean?"

"Why, somebody called me, Menella, just now, to come to it over the cliff. But then you called me back."

And with that he stopped to stoop and kiss her with a passion that, she felt, was not for her, but for the life to which she had recalled him.

"Don't let me go, Menella! Keep me with you, my blessed one! Can you forgive me, Menella, for the ill I've brought on you? It's you I love, Menella, remember that! You'll come with me to London?"

He waited an instant, half wild, half wistful, for a response. But he was, at last, too much for Menella. Her courage forsook her: almost her love for him fled. She gave a little sigh of utter desolation that reproached him with betrayal of all promises, of flight from her into strange lands, into a soul's desertion of its mate. She thought to herself—I'm widowed! And while he, getting no quick answer, resumed his pacing up and down, she, leaning her forehead against the stone lion-head of the bench, began to cry.

It was her fate in life to serve him: her pitiful weakness did more for his sanity than her piteous strength could do.

Jamie paused in his gesticulations, in his striding up and down. He halted: he frowned: he came to her: he sat down beside her and watched her. Presently he put his arm round her and drew her against a kinder pillow than the stone lion.

"But, Menella dear?" said Jamie: and his voice was quiet and his eyes were sane.

Sobbing she fought her last battle against the fate that pursued them and for the moment won it.

"You frighten me so!" wept Menella.

He abased himself. He had a confused memory of a shouting, crazed, gesticulating Jamie, protesting against unfair burdens piled upon him. This Jamie came and went, came in a whisper, with a shout, and was reabsorbed into an echoless quiet, leaving him, the true Jamie, dazed and empty, but her own true love still. This, stammering, he told her. And she, facile in her joys and sorrows, did not understand, but was appeased again, was a little comforted. And afterwards this momentary return of the boy Jamie was her dearest memory and comfort.

For the end was nearer than they knew. Jabez returned to tell them that the coach waited: and they went into the house arm in arm, reconciled. Jamie could even follow her, as she hurried to her room, to whisper —"This is the last journey I shall take you, Menella, dear, for months and months."

"Oh, Jamie, why?"

"You'll want to be quiet."

Her lips parted in a quick-drawn breath. There was a blessed new secret that she had whispered lately to a sullen Jamie— "Jamie, next year there may be a third person with us!" He had made her no answer. She had grieved in her bed o'nights because it had not moved him. But Jamie, it seemed, had nevertheless heard and had not forgotten. He, too, looked forward: he, too, dreamed of the joy to come. She was a rose in bloom as she left him.

When, cloaked, bonneted, she returned to Jamie, cloaked also now and taking his travelling pistols from their case on the great inlaid sideboard, she was still a rose in bloom.

She went out behind Jamie down the broad shallow steps to the waiting coach. As he put out his hand to help her into the coach, a horse tossed its head and tried to rear. He turned his head to shout an order to the careless groom, and as he did so he felt cold fingertips touch his palm, weigh down his hand, and leave it again.

"In, my dear?" he turned to say: and found Menella still beside him, waiting, her little foot poised on the step. Even as he turned she sprang up and in without his help, and settled herself on the near side of the seat. He, looking after her into the darkness of the coach with consternation, saw then that the woman he had handed in before her was his Cousin Hariot, who had seated herself in the farther corner of the coach, smiling. Her white transparent hand that had so lately touched his own lay now lightly on Menella's knee; but Menella, he realized, did not see her neighbour. The terrified horses reared again.

He shut the door on those two and caught at Jabez' mount.

"I'll join you later!" cried Jamie to the faces smiling at him from the window of the coach. Then, to the ashy Jabez—"Get up behind! You can take the horse presently! I'll wait on the moor." And so rode ahead.

He rode at a gallop. The coach, trundling after him, did not overtake him till the lodge gates were left behind. But on the moor, lax in the heather, the white horse standing over him, Jamie waited as he had promised. The heather cried from the ground and he had marked his forehead with the mark of Cain.

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(Continued from page 6)

any movies of this type, either. It seems they are content with making endless musicals, so-called comedies, detectives and Westerns. What wonders some film company could do by bringing to the screen such classics as "The Dunwich Horror," "The Moon Pool" "The Lost World," etc.

ROY HALE.

ALL-STAR ISSUE

Having just finished the "Undying Monster" I make haste to give comment. It has been some time since I have read a story which deals so well with psychogenic influences. The author has so completely covered the subject matter in this field, that I fail to find any fault to comment on. The psychognosis aspect is indeed excellent reading.

Machen's "The Novel of the Black Seal" rings the second bell of this all star issue. It could certainly not be coincidence that places these two allied stories in one issue.

I was especially pleased with Lawrence's illustrations—which added immensely to enjoyment of the stories. It's good to hear Virgil Finlay is to again adorn the pages of F.F.M. but by no means let him completely take the place of Lawrence.

JOHN M. CUNNINGHAM.

2050 Gilbert St.,
Beaumont, Texas.

HAPPY ABOUT F.F.M.

Seems that you've decided to cater to my tastes for the weird and supernatural. Am I happy? Didn't think I'd ever reach the place where I'd actually drool over a mag, but—F.F.M. is exceeding my fondest dreams. It probably won't appeal to science fiction fans who prefer space operas, but what a break for the weirdests.

WALTER DUNKELBERGER.

National Fantasy Fan Federation,
1443 4th Ave. So.,
Fargo, N. D.

We have heard that Dunkelberger has reproductions of the First Finlay Portfolio at a cost of 50c to members of the N.F.F.F. address above. Non-members, it is said, can get them for $1.00 from Art Widner, 87 Colonial Rd., No. Weymouth, Mass.

"BEST WEREWOLF YARN"

The June ish was to my mind the best you've had since Dec., '44, "The Lost Continent," which is my favorite of the new regime.

"Undying Monster," which I had expected to be merely mediocre, surprisingly turned out to be the best "werewolf" yarn I've ever read. It was the first story of novel length published in F.F.M. which lived up to the mag's title. Fantastic (?) in premise, it yet was a perfectly logical and well plotted mystery story whose solution any reader of weird fiction should be able to find. I must admit that to me the greatest mystery of the story consisted of trying to figure how those wonderful Lawrence pix were going to fit into the yarn.

I was interested to note the basic similarity between "Undying Monster" and Merritt's "Dwellers in the Mirage." Both hinged around the survival of ancestral memories from pre-Viking days and the disastrous consequences when these remembrances were aroused. The same germ idea was developed in radically dissimilar ways though; Merritt with a typically weird and beautiful setting in which the memory idea was merely one of a number of fantastic conceptions; Kerruish with competent verisimilitude in a normal setting which served to point out and accentuate the uniqueness of the idea. I liked 'em both although I rate Merritt first because of his arresting development and more beautiful writing in amplifying the idea.

I've always rated "Black Seal" as about tops because in it Machen deftly does what Lovecraft unsuccessfully attempted to do for over a decade: to depict an inhuman menace or being so that it literally congealed your blood without getting you involved in grotesque descriptions or miscellaneous tonnage of words. HPL said it was better to imply the fictitious monster, not to give an artistic, accurate picture; but he too rarely succeeded in living up to his own ideal. Machen in a very brief span leaves you the feeling that "it shouldn't happen to a dog" while I finish most Lovecraft epics (not all, I must confess) with the feeling that not only the victim but also the author should have succumbed to the unnamed unspeakable unimaginable inconceivable unintelligible horror from the farthest dimensions. More Machen, maestro, please.

Good to hear Finlay's on his way back.

Well, the next issue will have to slump, I guess; but I'd be mightily encouraged to read in it that you were going monthly or that F.N. was coming back or sumpin'.

GARVIN BERRY.

1107 Fugate St.,
Houston, Texas.

ABOUT UNDYING MONSTERS

Tearing and clawing my desperate way through the lingering tangle of beeswax and garlic, family banes, supersensitives and assorted ghouls, I offer herewith a few comments on the June F.F.M.

Generally speaking, I early became thoroughly bored with conventional monsters in my fantasy reading. As a rule, every vampire was simply Stoker's *Dracula* with variations, and I prefer my *Dracula* straight, thank you. Most monsters stacked up unfavorably against Shelley's moving tale of *Frankenstein*, and so on down the line of ghouls, werewolves, elementals, and Unutterable Beings.

It speaks well for Kerruish's *The Undying*

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DAEMON

By C. L. Moore

For such as Luiz o Bobo the powers of ancient earth will gather when his cry for help is heard . . . but only for such as he, who have no souls—who can see the dainty hoofs of Pan and can hear the strange and terrible music of his pipes. . . .

PADRE, the words came slowly. It is a long time now since I have spoken in the Portuguese tongue. For more than a year, my companions here were those who do not speak with the tongues of men. And you must remember, *padre,* that in Rio, where I was born, I was named Luiz *o Bobo,* which is to say, Luiz the Simple. There was something wrong with my head, so that my hands were always clumsy and my feet stumbled over each other. I could not remember very much. But I could see things. Yes, *padre,* I could see things such as other men do not know.

I can see things now. Do you know who stands beside you, *padre,* listening while I talk? Never mind that. I am Luiz *o Bobo* still, though here on this island there were great powers of healing, and I can remember now the things that happened to me years ago. More easily than I remember what happened last week or the week before that. The year has been like a single day, for time on this island is not like time outside. When a man lives with *them,* there is no time.

The *ninfas,* I mean. And the others. . . .

I am not lying. Why should I? I am going to die, quite soon now. You were right to tell me that, *padre.* But I knew. I knew already. Your crucifix is very pretty, *padre.* I like the way it shines in the sun. But that is not for me. You see, I have always known the things that walk beside men—other men. Not me. Perhaps they are souls, and I have no soul, being simple. Or perhaps they are daemons such as only clever men have. Or perhaps they are both these things. I do not know. But I know that I am dying. After the *ninfas* go away, I would not care to live.

Since you ask how I came to this place, I will tell you if the time remains to me. You will not believe. This is the one place on earth, I think, where they lingered still—those things you do not believe.

But before I speak of them, I must go back to an earlier day, when I was young beside the blue bay of Rio, under Sugar Loaf. I remember the docks of Rio, and the children who mocked me. I was big and strong, but I was *o Bobo* with a mind that knew no yesterday or tomorrow.

Minha avó, my grandmother, was kind to me. She was from Ceará, where the yearly droughts kill hope, and she was half blind, with pain in her back always. She worked so that we could eat, and she did not scold me too much. I know that she was good. It was something I could see; I have always had that power.

One morning my grandmother did not waken. She was cold when I touched her hand. That did not frighten me for the —good thing—about her lingered for a while. I closed her eyes and kissed her, and then I went away. I was hungry, and because I was *o Bobo,* I thought that someone might give me food, out of kindness. . . .

In the end, I foraged from the rubbish-heaps.

I did not starve. But I was lost and alone. Have you ever felt that, *padre?* It is like a bitter wind from the mountains and no sheepskin cloak can shut it out. One night I wandered into a sailors' saloon, and I remember that there were many dark shapes with eyes that shone, hovering beside the men who drank there. The men had red, windburned faces and tarry hands. They made me drink *'guardiente* until the room whirled around and went dark.

I woke in a dirty bunk. I heard planks groaning and the floor rocked under me.

Yes, *padre,* I had been shanghaied. I stumbled on deck, half blind in the dazzling sunlight, and there I found a man who had a strange and shining daemon. He was the captain of the ship,

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though I did not know it then. I scarcely saw the man at all. I was looking at the daemon.

Now, most men have shapes that walk behind them, *padre*. Perhaps you know that, too. Some of them are dark, like the shapes I saw in the saloon. Some of them are bright, like that which followed my grandmother. Some of them are colored, pale colors like ashes or rainbows. But this man had a scarlet daemon. And it was a scarlet beside which blood itself is ashen. The color blinded me. And yet it drew me, too. I could not take my eyes away, nor could I look at it long without pain. I never saw a color more beautiful, nor more frightening. It made my heart shrink within me, and quiver like a dog that fears the whip. If I have a soul, perhaps it was my soul that quivered. And I feared the beauty of the color as much as I feared the terror it awoke in me. It is not good to see beauty in that which is evil.

Other men upon the deck had daemons too. Dark shapes and pale shapes that followed them like their shadows. But I saw all the daemons waver away from the red, beautiful thing that hung above the captain of the ship.

The other daemons watched out of burning eyes. The red daemon had no eyes. Its beautiful, blind face was turned always toward the captain, as if it saw only through his vision. I could see the lines of its closed lids. And my terror of its beauty, and my terror of its evil, were nothing to my terror of the moment when the red daemon might lift those lids and look out upon the world.

THE captain's name was Jonah Stryker. He was a cruel man, dangerous to be near. The men hated him. They were at his mercy while we were at sea, and the captain was at the mercy of his daemon. That was why I could not hate him as the others did. Perhaps it was pity I felt for Jonah Stryker. And you, who know men better than I, will understand that the pity I had for him made the captain hate me more bitterly than even his crew hated him.

When I came on deck that first morning, because I was blinded by the sun and by the redness of the scarlet daemon, and because I was ignorant and bewildered, I broke a shipboard rule. What it was, I do not know. There were so many, and I never could remember very clearly in those days. Perhaps I walked between him and the wind. Would that be wrong on a clipper ship, *padre?* I never understood.

The captain shouted at me, in the Yankee tongue, evil words whose meaning I did not know, but the daemon glowed redder when he spoke them. And he struck me with his fist, so that I fell. There was a look of secret bliss on the blind crimson face hovering above his, because of the anger that rose in him. I thought that through the captain's eyes the closed eyes of the daemon were watching me.

I wept. In that moment, for the first time, I knew how truly alone a man like me must be. For I had no daemon. It was not the simple loneliness for my grandmother or for human companionship that brought the tears to my eyes. That I could endure. But I saw the look of joy upon the blind daemon-face because of the captain's evil, and I remembered the look of joy that a bright shape sometimes wears who follows a good man. And I knew that no deed of mine would ever bring joy or sorrow to that which moves behind a man with a soul.

I lay upon the bright, hot deck and wept, not because of the blow, but because I knew suddenly, for the first time, that I was alone. No daemon for good or evil would ever follow me. Perhaps because I have no soul. *That* loneliness, father, is something not even you could understand.

The captain seized my arm and pulled me roughly to my feet. I did not understand, then, the words he spoke in his Yankee tongue, though later I picked up enough of that speech to know what men were saying around me. You may think it strange that *o Bobo* could learn a foreign tongue. It was easy for me. Easier, perhaps, than for a wiser man. Much I read upon the faces of their daemons, and there were many words whose real sounds I did not know, but whose meaning I found in the hum of thoughts about a man's head.

The captain shouted for a man named Barton, and the first mate hurried up, looking frightened. The captain pushed me back against the rail so that I staggered, seeing him and the deck and the watching daemons through the rainbows that tears cast before one's eyes.

There was loud talk, and many gestures toward me and the other two men who had been shanghaied from the port of Rio. The first mate tapped his head when

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he pointed to me, and the captain cursed again in the tongue of the foreigners, so that his daemon smiled very sweetly at his shoulder.

I think that was the first time I let the captain see pity on my face when I looked at him.

That was the one thing he could not bear. He snatched a belaying pin from the rail and struck me in the face with it, so that I felt the teeth break in my mouth. The blood I spat upon the deck was a beautiful color, but it looked paler than water beside the color of the captain's daemon. I remember all the daemons but the red one leaned a little forward when they saw blood running, snuffing up the smell and the brightness of it like incense. The red one did not even turn his blind face.

The captain struck me again because I had soiled his deck. My first task aboard the *Dancing Martha* was to scrub up my own blood from the planking.

Afterward they dragged me to the galley and threw me into the narrow alley at the cook's feet. I burned my hands on the stove. The captain laughed to see me jump back from it. It is a terrible thing that, though I heard his laughter many times a day, I never heard mirth in it. But there was mirth on his daemon's face.

Pain was with me for many days thereafter, because of the beating and the burns, but I was glad in a way. Pain kept my mind from the loneliness I had just discovered in myself. Those were bad days, *padre*. The worst days of my life. Afterward, when I was no longer lonely, I looked back upon them as a soul in paradise might look back on purgatory.

No, I am still alone. Nothing follows me as things follow other men. But here on the island I found the *ninfas*, and I was content.

I found them because of the Shaughnessy. I can understand him today in a way I could not do just then. He was a wise man and I am *o Bobo*, but I think I know some of his thoughts now, because today I, too, know I am going to die.

The Shaughnessy lived many days with death. I do not know how long. It was weeks and months in coming to him, though it lived in his lungs and his heart as a child lives within its mother, biding its time to be born. The Shaughnessy was a passenger. He had much money, so that he could do what he willed with his last days of living. Also he came of a great family in a foreign land called Ireland. The captain hated him for many reasons. He scorned him because of his weakness, and he feared him because he was ill. Perhaps he envied him too, because his people had once been kings and because the Shaughnessy was not afraid to die. The captain, I know, feared death. He feared it most terribly. He was right to fear it. He could not know that a daemon rode upon his shoulder, smiling its sweet, secret smile, but some instinct must have warned him that it was there, biding its time like the death in the Shaughnessy's lungs.

I saw the captain die. I know he was right to fear the hour of his daemon. . . .

Those were bad days on the ship. They were worse because of the great beauty all around us. I had never been at sea before, and the motion of the ship was a wonder to me, the clouds of straining sail above us and the sea all about, streaked with the colors of the currents and dazzling where the sun-track lay. White gulls followed us with their yellow feet tucked up as they soared over the deck, and porpoises followed too, playing in great arcs about the ship and dripping diamonds in the sun.

I worked hard, for no more wages than freedom from blows when I did well, and the scraps that were left from the table after the cook had eaten his fill. The cook was not a bad man like the captain, but he was not a good man, either. He did not care. His daemon was smoky, asleep, indifferent to the cook and the world.

It was the Shaughnessy who made my life worth the trouble of living. If it had not been for him, I might have surrendered life and gone into the breathing sea some night when no one was looking. It would not have been a sin for me, as it would be for a man with a soul.

But because of the Shaughnessy I did not. He had a strange sort of daemon himself, mother-of-pearl in the light, with gleams of darker colors when the shadows of night came on. He may have been a bad man in his day. I do not know. The presence of death in him opened his eyes, perhaps. I know only that to me he was very kind. His daemon grew brighter as the man himself grew weak with the oncoming of death.

He told me many tales. I have never seen the foreign country of Ireland, but I walked there often in my dreams because of the tales he told. The foreign isles called Greece grew clear to me too, be-

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cause the Shaughnessy had dwelt there and loved them.

And he told me of things which he said were not really true, but I thought he said that with only half his mind, because I saw them so clearly while he talked. Great Odysseus was a man of flesh and blood to me, with a shining daemon on his shoulder, and the voyage that took so many enchanted years was a voyage I almost remembered, as if I myself had toiled among the crew.

He told me of burning Sappho, and I knew why the poet used that word for her, and I think the Shaughnessy knew too, though we did not speak of it. I knew how dazzling the thing must have been that followed her through the white streets of Lesbos and leaned upon her shoulder while she sang.

He told me of the nereids and the oceanids, and once I think I saw, far away in the sun-track that blinded my eyes, a mighty head rise dripping from the water, and heard the music of a wreathed horn as Triton called to his fish-tailed girls.

THE *Dancing Martha* stopped at Jamaica for a cargo of sugar and rum. Then we struck out across the blue water toward a country called England. But our luck was bad. Nothing was right about the ship on that voyage. Our water-casks had not been cleaned as they should be, and the drinking water became foul. A man can pick the maggots out of his salt pork if he must, but bad water is a thing he cannot mend.

So the captain ordered our course changed for a little island he knew in these waters. It was too tiny to be inhabited, a rock rising out of the great blue deeps with a fresh spring bubbling high up in a cup of the forested crags.

I saw it rising in the dawn like a green cloud on the horizon. Then it was a jewel of green as we drew nearer, floating on the blue water. And my heart was a bubble in my chest, shining with rainbow colors, lighter than the air around me. Part of my mind thought that the island was an isle in Rio Bay, and somehow I felt that I had come home again and would find my grandmother waiting on the shore. I forgot so much in those days. I forgot that she was dead. I thought we would circle the island and come in across the dancing Bay to the foot of the Rua d'Oporto, with the lovely city rising on its hills above the water.

I felt so sure of all this that I ran to tell the Shaughnessy of my delight in homecoming. And because I was hurrying, and blind to all on deck with the vision of Rio in my eyes, I blundered into the captain himself. He staggered and caught my arm to save his footing, and we were so close together that for a moment the crimson daemon swayed above my own head, its eyeless face turned down to mine.

I looked up at that beautiful, smiling face, so near that I could touch it and yet, I knew, farther away than the farthest star. I looked at it and screamed in terror. I had never been so near a daemon before, and I could feel its breath on my face, sweet-smelling, burning my skin with its scorching cold.

The captain was white with his anger and his—his envy? Perhaps it was envy he felt even of me, *o Bobo,* for a man with a daemon like that one hanging on his shoulder may well envy the man without a soul. He hated me bitterly, because he knew I pitied him, and to receive the pity of *o Bobo* must be a very humbling thing. Also he knew that I could not look at him for more than a moment or two, because of the blinding color of his daemon. I think he did not know why I blinked and looked away, shuddering inside, whenever he crossed my path. But he knew it was not the angry fear which other men felt for him which made me avert my eyes. I think he sensed that because he was damned I could not gaze upon him long, and that too made him hate and fear and envy the lowliest man in his crew.

All the color went out of his face as he looked at me, and the daemon above him flushed a deeper and lovelier scarlet, and the captain reached for a belaying pin with a hand that trembled. That which looked out of his eyes was not a man at all, but a daemon, and a daemon that quivered with joy as I was quivering with terror.

I heard the bone crack when the club came down upon my skull. I saw lightning dazzle across my eyes and my head was filled with brightness. I remember almost nothing more of that bad time. A little night closed around me and I saw through it only when the lightning of the captain's blows illumined the dark. I heard his daemon laughing.

When the day came back to me, I was lying on the deck with the Shaughnessy kneeling beside me bathing my face with

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something that stung. His daemon watched me over his shoulder, bright mother-of-pearl colors, its face compassionate. I did not look at it. The loneliness in me was sharper than the pain of my body, because no daemon of my own hung shining over my hurts, and no daemon ever would.

The Shaughnessy spoke in the soft, hushing Portuguese of Lisboa, that always sounded so strange to me.

"Lie still, Luiz," he was saying. "Don't cry. I'll see that he never touches you again."

I did not know until then that I was weeping. It was not for pain. It was for the look on his daemon's face, and for loneliness.

The Shaughnessy said, "When he comes back from the island, I'll have it out with him." He said more than that, but I was not listening. I was struggling with a thought, and thoughts came hard through the sleepiness that always clouded my brain.

The Shaughnessy meant kindly, but I knew the captain was master upon the ship. And it still seemed to me that we were anchored in the Bay of Rio and my grandmother awaited me on the shore.

I sat up. Beyond the rail the high green island was bright, sunshine winking from the water all around it, and from the leaves that clothed its slopes. I knew what I was going to do.

When the Shaughnessy went away for more water, I got to my feet. There was much pain in my head, and all my body ached from the captain's blows, and the deck was reeling underfoot with a motion the waves could not give it. When I got to the rail, I fell across it before I could jump, and slid into the sea very quietly.

I remember only flashes after that. Salt water burning me, and great waves lifting and falling all around me, and the breath hot in my lungs when the water did not burn even hotter there. Then there was sand under my knees, and I crawled up a little beach and I think I fell asleep in the shelter of a clump of palms.

Then I dreamed that it was dark, with stars hanging overhead almost near enough to touch, and so bright they burned my eyes. I dreamed I heard men calling me through the trees, and I did not answer. I dreamed I heard voices quarreling, the captain's voice loud and angry, the Shaughnessy's tight and thin. I dreamed of oarlocks creaking and water splashing from dipping blades, and the sound if it receding into the warmth and darkness.

I put up a hand to touch a star cluster that hung above my head, and the cluster was bright and tingling to feel. Then I saw that it was the Shaughnessy's face.

I said, "Oh, *s'nhor,*" in a whisper, because I remembered that the captain had spoken from very close by.

The Shaughnessy smiled at me in the starlight. "Don't whisper, Luiz. We're alone now."

I WAS happy on the island. The Shaughnessy was kind to me, and the days were long and bright, and the island itself was friendly. One knows that of a place. And I thought, in those days, that I would never see the captain again or his beautiful scarlet daemon smiling its blind, secret smile above his shoulder. He had left us to die upon the island, and one of us did die.

The Shaughnessy said that another man might have perished of the blows the captain gave me. But I think because my brain is such a simple thing it mended easily, and perhaps the blow that made my skull crack let in a little more of wit than I had owned before. Or perhaps happiness did it, plenty of food to eat, and the Shaughnessy's tales of the things that—that you do not believe, *meu padre.*

The Shaughnessy grew weak as I grew strong. He lay all day in the shade of a broad tree by the shore, and as his strength failed him, his daemon grew brighter and more remote, as if it were already halfway through the veil of another world.

When I was well again, the Shaughnessy showed me how to build a thatched lean-to that would withstand the rain.

"There may be hurricanes, Luiz," he said to me. "This *barraca* will be blown down. Will you remember how to build another?"

"*Sim,*" I said. "I shall remember. You will show me."

"No, Luiz. I shall not be here. You must remember."

He told me many things, over and over again, very patiently. How to find the shellfish on the rocks when the tide was out, how to trap fish in the stream, what fruit I might eat and what I must never touch. It was not easy for me. When I tried to remember too much it made my head hurt.

I explored the island, coming back to

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tell him all I had found. At first I was sure that when I had crossed the high hills and stood upon their peaks I would see the beautiful slopes of Rio shining across the water. My heart sank when I stood for the first time upon the heights and saw only more ocean, empty, heaving between me and the horizon.

But I soon forgot again, and Rio and the past faded from my mind. I found the pool cupped high in a hollow of the crags, where clear sweet water bubbled up in the shadow of the trees and the streamlet dropped away in a series of pools and falls toward the levels far below. I found groves of pale trees with leaves like streaming hair, rustling with the noise of the waterfall. I found no people here, and yet I felt always that there were watchers among the leaves, and it seemed to me that laughter sounded sometimes behind me, smothered when I turned my head.

When I told the Shaughnessy this he smiled at me.

"I've told you too many tales," he said. "But if anyone could see them, I think it would be you, Luiz."

"*Sim, s'nhor,*" I said. "Tell me again of the forest-women. Could they be here, do you think, *s'nhor?*"

He let sand trickle through his fingers, watching it as if the fall of sand had some meaning to his mind that I could not fathom.

"Ah, well," he said, "they might be. They like the olive groves of Greece best, and the tall trees on Olympus. But every mountain has its oread. Here, too, perhaps. The Little People left Ireland years ago and for all I know the oreads have fled from civilization too, and found such places as this to put them in mind of home. . . .

"There was one who turned into a fountain once, long ago. I saw that fountain in Greece. I drank from it. There must have been a sort of magic in the waters, for I always went back to Greece after that. I'd leave, but I couldn't stay long away." He smiled at me. "Maybe now, because I can't go back again, the oreads have come to me here."

I looked hard at him to see if he meant what he said, but he shook his head and smiled again. "I think they haven't come for me. Maybe for you, Luiz. Belief is what they want. If you believe, perhaps you'll really see them. I'd be the last man to deny a thing like that. You'll need something like them to keep you company, my friend—afterward." And he trickled sand through his fingers again, watching it fall with a look upon his face I did not understand.

The night came swiftly on that island. It was a lovely place. The Shaughnessy said islands have a magic all their own, for they are the place where earth and ocean meet. We used to lie on the shore watching the fire that burned upon the edges of the waves lap up the beach and breathe away again, and the Shaughnessy told me many tales. His voice was growing weaker, and he did not trouble so much any more to test my memory for the lessons he had taught. But he spoke of ancient magic, and more and more in these last days, his mind turned back to the wonders of the country called Ireland.

He told me of the little green people with their lanterns low down among the ferns. He told me of the *unicórnio,* swift as the swiftest bird, a magical stag with one horn upon its forehead as long as the shaft of a spear and as sharp as whatever is sharpest. And he told me of Pan, goat-footed, moving through the woodland with laughter running before him and panic behind, the same panic terror which my language and the Shaughnessy's get from his name. *Pânico,* we Brazilians call it.

One evening he called to me and held up a wooden cross. "Luiz, look at this," he said. I saw that upon the arms of the cross he had made deep carvings with his knife. "This is my name," he told me. "If anyone ever comes here asking for me, you must show them this cross."

I looked at it closely. I knew what he meant about the name—it is that sort of enchantment in which markings can speak with a voice too tiny for the ears to hear. I am *o Bobo* and I never learned to read, so that I do not understand how this may be done.

"Some day," the Shaughnessy went on, "I think someone will come. My people at home may not be satisfied with whatever story Captain Stryker invents for them. Or a drunken sailor may talk. If they do find this island, Luiz, I want this cross above my grave to tell them who I was. And for another reason," he said thoughtfully. For another reason too. But that need not worry you, *meu amgio.*"

He told me where to dig the bed for him. He did not tell me to put in the leaves and the flowers. I thought of that myself, three days later, when the time came. . . .

Because he had wished it, I put him in

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the earth. I did not like doing it. But in a way I feared not to carry out his commands, for the daemon of the Shaughnessy still hovered above him, very bright, very bright—so bright I could not look it in the face. I thought there was music coming from it, but I could not be sure.

I put the flowers over him and then the earth. There was more to go back in the grave than I had taken out, so I made a mound above him, as long as the Shaughnessy was long, and I drove in the stake of the wooden cross, above where his head was, as he had told me. Then for a moment I laid my ear to the markings to see if I could hear what they were saying, for it seemed to me that the sound of his name, whispered to me by the marks his hands had made, would lighten my loneliness a little. But I heard nothing.

When I looked up, I saw his daemon glow like the sun at noon, a light so bright I could not bear it upon my eyes. I put my hands before them. When I took them down again, there was no daemon.

YOU will not believe me when I tell you this, *padre,* but in that moment the—the feel of the island changed. All the leaves, I think, turned the other way on the trees, once, with a rustle like one vast syllable whispered for that time only, and never again.

I think I know what the syllable was. Perhaps I will tell you, later—if you let me.

And the island breathed. It was like a man who has held his breath for a long while, in fear or pain, and let it run out deeply when the fear or the pain departed.

I did not know, then, what it was. But I thought it would go up the steep rocks to the pool, because I wanted a place that would not remind me of the Shaughnessy. So I climbed the crags among the hanging trees. And it seemed to me that I heard laughter when the wind rustled among them. Once I saw what I thought must be a *ninfa,* brown and green in the forest. But she was too shy. I turned my head, and the brown and green stilled into the bark and foliage of the tree.

When I came to the pool, the unicorn was drinking. He was very beautiful, whiter than foam, whiter than cloud, and his mane lay upon his great shoulders like spray upon the shoulder of a wave. The tip of his long, spiraled horn just touched the water as he drank, so that the ripples ran outward in circles all around it. He tossed his head when he scented me, and I saw the glittering diamonds of the water sparkling from his velvet muzzle. He had eyes as green as a pool with leaves reflecting in it, and a spot of bright gold in the center of each eye.

Very slowly, with the greatest stateliness, he turned from the water and moved away into the forest. I know I heard a singing where he disappeared.

I was still *o Bobo* then. I drank where he had drunk, thinking there was a strange, sweet taste to the water now, and then I went down to the *barraca* on the beach, for I had forgotten already and thought perhaps the Shaughnessy might be there. . . .

Night came, and I slept. Dawn came, and I woke again. I bathed in the ocean. I gathered shellfish and fruit, and drank of the little stream that fell from the mountain pool. And as I leaned to drink, two white dripping arms rose up to clasp my neck, and a mouth as wet and cold as the water pressed mine. It was the kiss of acceptance.

After that the *ninfas* of the island no longer hid their faces from me.

My hair and beard grew long. My garments tore upon the bushes and became the rags you see now. I did not care. It did not matter. It was not my face they saw. They saw my simpleness. And I was one with the *ninfas* and the others.

The oread of the mountain came out to me often, beside the pool where the unicorn came to drink. She was wise and strange, being immortal. The eyes slanted upward in her head, and her hair was a shower of green leaves blowing always backward in a wind that moved about her when no other breezes blew. She used to sit beside the pool in the hot, still afternoons, the unicorn lying beside her and her brown fingers combing out his silver mane. Her wise slanting eyes, the color of shadows in the forest, and his round green eyes the color of the pool, with the flecks of gold in each, used to watch me as we talked.

The oread told me many things. Many things I could never tell you, *padre.* But it was as the Shaughnessy had guessed. Because I believed, they were glad of my presence there. While the Shaughnessy lived, they could not come out into the plane of being, but they watched from the other side. . . . They had been afraid. But they were afraid no longer.

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For many years they have been homeless now, blowing about the world in search of some spot of land where no disbelief dwells, and where one other thing has not taken footing. . . . They told me of the isles of Greece, with love and longing upon their tongues, and it seemed to me that I heard the Shaughnessy speak again in their words.

They told me of the One I had not yet seen, or more than glimpsed. That happened when I chanced to pass near the Shaughnessy's grave in the dimness of the evening, and I saw the cross that bore his name had fallen. I took it up and held it to my ear again, hoping the tiny voices of the markings would whisper. But that is a mystery which has never been given me.

I saw the—the One—loitering by that grave. But when I put up the cross, he went away, slowly, sauntering into the dark woods, and a thin piping floated back to me from the spot where he had vanished.

Perhaps the One did not care for my presence there. The others welcomed me. It was not often any more, they said, that men like me were free to move among them. Since the hour of their banishment, they told me, and wept when they spoke of that hour, there had been too few among mankind who really knew them.

I asked about the banishment, and they said that it had happened long ago, very long ago. A great star had stood still in the sky over a stable in a town whose name I do not know. Once I knew it. I do not remember now. It was a town with a beautiful name.

The skies opened and there was singing in the heavens, and after that the gods of Greece had to flee. They have been fleeing ever since.

They were glad I had come to join them. And I was doubly glad. For the first time since my grandmother died, I knew I was not alone. Even the Shaughnessy had not been as close to me as these *ninfas* were. For the Shaughnessy had a daemon. The *ninfas* are immortal, but they have no souls. That, I think, is why they welcomed me so warmly. We without souls are glad of companionship among others of our kind. There is a loneliness among our kind that can only be assuaged by huddling together. The *ninfas* knew it, who must live forever, and I shared it with them, who may die before this night is over.

Well, it was good to live upon the island. The days and the months went by beautifully, full of clear colors and the smell of the sea and the stars at night as bright as lanterns just above us. I even grew less *Bobo*, because the *ninfas* spoke wisdom of a kind I never heard among men. They were good months.

And then, one day, Jonah Stryker came back to the island.

YOU know, *padre*, why he came. The Shaughnessy in his wisdom had guessed that in Ireland men of the Shaughnessy's family might ask questions of Captain Stryker—questions the captain could not answer. But it had not been guessed that the captain might return to the island, swiftly, before the Shaughnessy's people could discover the truth, with the thought in his evil mind of wiping out all traces of the two he had left to die.

I was sitting on the shore that day, listening to the songs of two *ninfas* of the nereid kind as they lay in the edge of the surf, with the waves breaking over them when the water lapped up the slopes of sand. They were swaying their beautiful rainbow colored fish-bodies as they sang, and I heard the whisper of the surf in their voices, and the long rhythms of the undersea.

But suddenly there came a break in their song, and I saw upon one face before me, and then the other, a look of terror come. The green blood in their veins sank back with fear, and they looked at me, white with pallor and strangely transparent, as if they had halfway ceased to be. With one motion they turned their heads and stared out to sea.

I stared too. I think the first thing I saw was that flash of burning crimson, far out over the waves. And my heart quivered within me like a dog that fears the whip. I knew that beautiful, terrible color too well.

It was only then that I saw the *Dancing Martha*, lying at anchor beyond a ridge of rock. Between the ship and the shore a small boat rocked upon the waves, light flashing from oar-blades as the one man in the boat bent and rose and bent to his work. Above him, hanging like a crimson cloud, the terrible scarlet glowed.

When I looked back, the *ninfas* had vanished. Whether they slid back into the sea, or whether they melted away into nothingness before me I shall never know now. I did not see them again.

I went back a little way into the forest,

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and watched from among the trees. No dryads spoke to me, but I could hear their quick breathing and the leaves trembled all about me. I could not look at the scarlet daemon coming nearer and nearer over the blue water, but I could not look away long, either. It was so beautiful and so evil.

The captain was alone in the boat. I was not quite so *Bobo* then and I understood why. He beached the boat and climbed up the slope of sand, the daemon swaying behind him like a crimson shadow. I could see its blind eyes and the beautiful, quiet face shut up with bliss because of the thing the captain had come to do. He was carrying in his hand a long shining pistol, and he walked carefully, looking to left and right. His face was anxious, and his mouth had grown more cruel in the months since I saw him last.

I was sorry for him, but I was very frightened, too. I knew he meant to kill whomever he found alive upon the island, so that no tongue could tell the Shaughnessy's people of his wicked deed.

He found my thatched *barraca* at the edge of the shore, and kicked it to pieces with his heavy boots. Then he went on until he saw the long mound above the Shaughnessy's bed, with the cross standing where his head lay. He bent over the cross, and the markings upon it spoke to him as they would never speak to me. I heard nothing, but he heard and knew. He put out his hand and pulled up the cross from the Shaughnessy's grave.

Then he went to the ruins of my *barraca* and to the embers of the fire I kept smouldering there. He broke the cross upon his knee and fed the pieces into the hot coals. The wood was dry. I saw it catch flame and burn. I saw, too, the faint stirring of wind that sprang up with the flames, and I heard the sighing that ran through the trees around me. Now there was nothing here to tell the searchers who might come afterward that the Shaughnessy lay in the island earth. Nothing—except myself.

He saw my footprints around the ruined *barraca*. He stooped to look. When he rose again and peered around the shore and forest, I could see his eyes shine, and it was the daemon who looked out of them, not the man.

Following my tracks, he began to move slowly toward the forest where I was hiding.

Then I was very frightened. I rose and fled through the trees, and I heard the dryads whimpering about me as I ran. They drew back their boughs to let me pass and swept them back after me to bar the way. I ran and ran, upward among the rocks, until I came to the pool of the unicorn, and the oread of the mountain stood there waiting for me, her arm across the unicorn's neck.

There was a rising wind upon the island. The leaves threshed and talked among themselves, and the oread's leafy hair blew backward from her face with its wise slanting eyes. The unicorn's silver mane tossed in that wind and the water ruffled in the pool.

"There is trouble coming, Luiz," the oread told me.

"The daemon. I know." I nodded to her, and then blinked, because it seemed to me that she and the unicorn, like the sea-*ninfas*, were growing so pale I could see the trees behind them through their bodies. But perhaps that was because the scarlet of the daemon had hurt my eyes.

"There is a man with a soul again upon our island," the oread said. "A man who does not believe. Perhaps we will have to go, Luiz."

"The Shaughnessy had a daemon too," I told her. "Yet you were here before his daemon left him to the earth. Why must you go now?"

"His was a good daemon. Even so, we were not fully here while he lived. You must remember, Luiz, that hour I told you of when a star stood above a stable where a child lay, and all our power went from us. Where the souls of men dwell, we cannot stay. This new man has brought a very evil soul with him. It frightens us. Yet since he had burned the cross, perhaps the Master can fight. . . ."

"The Master?" I asked.

"The One we serve. The One you serve, Luiz. The One I think the Shaughnessy served, though he did not know it. The Lord of the opened eyes and the far places. He could not come until the Sign was taken down. Once you had a glimpse of him, when the Sign fell by accident from the grave, but perhaps you have forgotten that."

"I have not forgotten. I am not so *Bobo* now."

She smiled at me, and I could see the tree behind her through the smile.

"Then perhaps you can help the Master when the time comes. We cannot help. We are too weak already, because of the presence of the unbeliever, the man with the daemon. See?" She touched my hand, and

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I felt not the firm, soft brush of fingers but only a coolness like mist blowing across my skin.

"Perhaps the Master can fight him," the oread said, and her voice was very faint, like a voice from far away, though she spoke from so near to me. "I do not know about that. We must go, Luiz. We may not meet again. Good-bye, *caro bobo,* while I can still say good-by. . . ." The last of it was faint as the hushing of the leaves, and the oread and the unicorn together looked like smoke blowing from a campfire across the glade.

The knowledge of my loneliness came over me then more painfully than I had felt it since that hour when I first looked upon the captain's daemon and knew at last what my own sorrow was. But I had no time to grieve, for there was a sudden frightened whispering among the leaves behind me, and then the crackle of feet in boots, and then a flicker of terrible crimson among the trees.

I ran. I did not know where I ran. I heard the dryads crying, so it must have been among trees. But at last I came out upon the shore again and I saw the Shaughnessy's long grave without a cross above it. And I stopped short, and a thrill of terror went through me. For there was a Something that crouched upon the grave.

THE fear in me then was a new thing. A monstrous, dim fear that moves like a cloud about the Master. I knew he meant me no harm, but the fear was heavy upon me, making my head spin with panic. *Pânico.* . . .

The Master rose upon the grave, and he stamped his goat-hoofed foot twice and set the pipes to his bearded lips. I heard a thin, strange wailing music that made the blood chill inside me. And at the first sound of it there came again what I had heard once before upon the island.

The leaves upon all the trees turned over once, with a great single whispering of one syllable. The syllable was the Master's name. I fled from it in the *pânico* all men have felt who hear that name pronounced. I fled to the edge of the beach, and I could flee no farther. So I crouched behind a hillock of rock on the wet sand, and watched what came after me from the trees.

It was the captain, with his daemon swaying like smoke above his head. He carried the long pistol ready, and his eyes moved from left to right along the beach, seeking like a wild beast for his quarry.

He saw the Master, standing upon the Shaughnessy's grave.

I saw how he stopped, rigid, like a man of stone. The daemon swayed forward above his head, he stopped so suddenly. I saw how he stared. And such was his disbelief, that for an instant I thought even the outlines of the Master grew hazy. There is great power in the men with souls.

I stood up behind my rock. I cried above the noises of the surf, "Master—Great Pan—I believe!"

He heard me. He tossed his horned head and his bulk was solid again. He set the pipes to his lips.

Captain Stryker whirled when he heard me. The long pistol swung up and there was a flash and a roar, and something went by me with a whine of anger. It did not touch me.

Then the music of the pipes began. A terrible music, thin and high, like the ringing in the ears that has no source. It seized the captain as if with thin, strong fingers, making him turn back to the sound. He stood rigid again, staring, straining. The daemon above him turned uneasily from side to side, like a snake swaying.

Then Captain Stryker ran. I saw the sand fly up from under his boots as he fled southward along the shore. His daemon went after him, a red shadow with its eyes still closed, and after them both went Pan, moving delicately on the goat-hoofs, the pipes to his lips and his horns shining golden in the sun.

And that midday terror I think was greater than any terror that can stalk a man by dark.

I waited beside my rock. The sea was empty behind me except for the *Dancing Martha* waiting the captain's orders at its anchor. But no *ninfas* came in on the foam to keep me company; no heads rose wreathed with seaweed out of the water. The sea was empty and the island was empty too, except for a man and a daemon and the Piper who followed at their heels.

Myself I do not count. I have no soul.

It was nearly dark when they came back along the beach. I think the Piper had hunted them clear around the island, going slowly on his delicate hoofs, never hurrying, never faltering, and that dreadful thin music always in the captain's ears.

I saw the captain's face when he came back in the twilight. It was an old man's face, haggard, white, with deep lines in it

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and eyes as wild as Pan's. His clothing was torn to ribbons and his hands bled, but he still held the pistol and the red daemon still hung swaying above him.

I think the captain did not know that he had come back to his starting place. By that time, all places must have looked alike to him. He came wavering toward me blindly. I rose up behind my rock.

When he saw me he lifted the pistol again and gasped some Yankee words. He was a strong man, Captain Stryker. With all he had endured in that long chase, he still had the power to remember he must kill me. I did not think he had reloaded the pistol, and I stood up facing him across the sand.

Behind him Pan's pipes shrilled a warning, but the Master did not draw nearer to come between us. The red daemon swayed at the captain's back, and I knew why Pan did not come to my aid. Those who lost their power when the Child was born can never lay hands upon men who possess a soul. Even a soul as evil as the captain's stood like a rock between him and the touch of Pan. Only the pipes could reach a human's ears, but there was that in the sound of the pipes which did all Pan needed to do.

It could not save me. I heard the captain laugh, without breath, a strange, hoarse sound, and I saw the lightning dazzle from the pistol's mouth. The crash it made was like a blow that struck me here, in the chest. I almost fell. That blow was heavy, but I scarcely noticed it then. There was too much to do.

The captain was laughing, and I thought of the Shaughnessy, and I stumbled forward and took the pistol by its hot muzzle with my hand. I am strong. I tore it from the captain's fist and he stood there gaping at me, not believing anything he saw. He breathed in dreadful, deep gasps, and I found I was gasping too, but I did not know why just then.

The captain's eyes met mine, and I think he saw that even now I had no hate for him—only pity. For the man behind the eyes vanished and the crimson daemon of his rage looked out, because I dared to feel sorrow for him. I looked into the eyes that were not his, but the eyes behind the closed lids of the beautiful, blind face above him. It I hated, not him. And it was it I struck. I lifted the pistol and smashed it into the captain's face.

I was not very clear in my head just then. I struck the daemon with my blow, but it was the captain who reeled backward three steps and then fell. I am very strong. One blow was all I needed.

For a moment there was no sound in all the island. Even the waves kept their peace. The captain shuddered and gave one sigh, like that of a man who comes back to living reluctantly. He got his hands beneath him and rose upon them, peering at me through the hair that had fallen across his forehead. He was snarling like an animal.

I do not know what he intended then. I think he would have fought me until one of us was dead. But above him just then I saw the daemon stir. It was the first time I had ever seen it move except in answer to the captain's motion. All his life it had followed him, blind, silent, a shadow that echoed his gait and gestures. Now for the first time it did not obey him.

Now it rose up to a great, shining height above his head, and its color was suddenly very deep, very bright and deep, a blinding thing that hung above him too hot in color to look at. Over the beautiful blind face a look of triumph came. I saw ecstasy dawn over that face in all its glory and its evil.

I knew that this was the hour of the daemon.

Some knowledge deeper than any wisdom warned me to cover my eyes. For I saw its lids flicker, and I knew it would not be good to watch when that terrible gaze looked out at last upon a world it had never seen except through the captain's eyes.

I fell to my knees and covered my face. And the captain, seeing that, must have known at long last what it was I saw behind him. I think now that in the hour of a man's death, he knows. I think in that last moment he knows, and turns, and for the first time and the last, looks his daemon in the face.

I did not see him do it. I did not see anything. But I heard a great, resonant

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cry, like the mighty music that beats through paradise, a cry full of triumph and thanksgiving, and joy at the end of a long, long, weary road. There was mirth in it, and beauty, and all the evil the mind can compass.

Then fire glowed through my fingers and through my eyelids and into my brain. I could not shut it out. I did not even need to lift my head to see, for that sight would have blazed through my very bones.

I saw the daemon fall upon its master.

The captain sprang to his feet with a howl like a beast's howl, no mind or soul in it. He threw back his head and his arms went up to beat that swooping, beautiful, crimson thing away.

No flesh could oppose it. This was its hour. What sets that hour I do not know, but the daemon knew, and nothing could stop it now.

I saw the flaming thing descend upon the captain like a falling star. Through his defending arms it swept, and through his flesh and his bones and into the hollows where the soul dwells.

He stood for an instant transfixed, motionless, glowing with that bath of crimson light. Then I saw the crimson begin to shine *through* him, so that the shadows of his bones stood out upon the skin. And then fire shot up, wreathing from his eyes and mouth and nostrils. He was a lantern of flesh for that fire of the burning spirit. But he was a lantern that is consumed by the flame it carries. . . .

When the color became too bright for the eyes to bear it, I tried to turn away. I could not. The pain in my chest was too great. I thought of the Shaughnessy in that moment, who knew, too, what pain in the chest was like. I think that was the first moment when it came to me that, like the Shaughnessy, I too was going to die.

Before my eyes, the captain burned in the fire of his daemon, burned and burned, his living eyes looking out at me through the crimson glory, and the laughter of the daemon very sweet above the sound of the whining flame. I could not watch and I could not turn away.

But at last the whine began to die. Then the laughter roared out in one great peal of triumph, and the beautiful crimson color, so dreadfully more crimson than blood, flared in a great burst of light that turned to blackness against my eyeballs.

When I could see again, the captain's body lay flat upon the sand. I know death when I see it. He was not burned at all. He looked as any dead man looks, flat and silent. It was his soul I had watched burning, not his body.

The daemon had gone back again to its own place. I knew that, for I could feel my aloneness on the island.

The Others had gone too. The presence of that fiery daemon was more, in the end, than their power could endure. Perhaps they shun an evil soul more fearfully than a good one, knowing themselves nothing of good and evil, but fearing what they do not understand.

YOU know, *padre,* what came after. The men from the *Dancing Martha* took their captain away next morning. They were frightened of the island. They looked for that which had killed him, but they did not look far, and I hid in the empty forest until they went away.

I do not remember their going. There was a burning in my chest, and this blood I breathe out ran from time to time, as it does now. I do not like the sight of it. Blood is a beautiful color, but it reminds me of too much that was beautiful also, and much redder. . . .

Then you came, *padre.* I do not know how long thereafter. I know the Shaughnessy's people brought you with their ship, to find him or his grave. You know now. And I am glad you came. It is good to have a man like you beside me at this time. I wish I had a daemon of my own, to grow very bright and vanish when I die, but that is not for *o Bobo* and I am used to that kind of loneliness.

I would not live, you see, now that the *ninfas* are gone. To be with them was good, and we comforted one another in our loneliness but, *padre,* I will tell you this much. It was a chilly comfort we gave each other, at the best. I am a man, though *bobo,* and I know. They are *ninfas,* and will never guess how warm and wonderful it must be to own a soul. I would not tell them if I could. I was sorry for the *ninfas, padre.* They are, you see, immortal.

As for me, I will forget loneliness in a little while. I will forget everything. I would not want to be a *ninfa* and live forever.

There is one behind you, *padre.* It is very bright. It watches me across your shoulder, and its eyes are wise and sad. No, daemon, this is no time for sadness. Be sorry for the *ninfas,* daemon, and for men like him who burned upon this beach. But not for me. I am well content.

I will go now.

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(Continued from page 97)

Monster that I stuck with it at all through the early maze of superstitious drivel and characters dashing madly about screaming "The Monster!" As the story progressed, however, it became evident that things might look up a bit. In retrospect, the items I liked in the story were (1) the general brooding atmosphere, (2) the idea of the purely mental monster rather than an actual change from man to beast, which, I think, is a little silly, and (3) the absence of the usual scene wherein the foul Monster comes roaring into the heroine's bedchamber, to be eventually rescued by Horatio. The business about the firs and pines and stars was very effective, I thought.

On the other side of the fence, I didn't at all go for any of the characters; they seemed very unreal—more so than the monster, in fact. Luna, in particular, was a case for the bughouse, in my humble opinion. The romance department was written like a bad play—you could almost see the hams emoting on the stage with violent motions with the hands. All in all though, *The Undying Monster* was an interesting yarn—if we must have werewolves in *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, keep them on this level. But . . . must we have them? I hope not.

Machen's *Novel of the Black Seal* was typical of his work—calm, well-written, and thought-provoking.

Lawrence's cover is splendid, and so are his interior pix. They constitute his best work in some time—Finlay had better look to his laurels when he returns. I hope there's plenty of room for them both in F.F.M.

Without further meandering about the keys of my Remington, I shall herewith fade away into the night. Star-lit, of course, with the fragrance of fir and pine in my nostrils. *Awrr-o-o-o-o-o!*

CHAD OLIVER.

Crystal City,
Texas.

F.F.M. IN THE WAR

I just finished "The Undying Monster," by Kerruish, and enjoyed it quite a bit, especially the last few pages, during the last hypnosis, and I seem to recognize some old literary acquaintances, The Aesir gods, under the thin disguise of the Asa ditto, and Asa Lok seems to be none other than Friend Loki, Mischief-maker *par excellence!* Am I right, or are we thinking of two different sets of beings? At any rate, I thought it excellent, and, in a different way quite as good as anything I've seen in the dozen or so back F. F. M.s I've bought lately. (I just returned from 14 mo's in France, and Dad didn't always get all the magazines I asked him to send me.)

It seems to me that the demand for more Merrittales and more of Derleth, Machen et al is fully justified, as neither my F.F.M.-inclined buddy nor myself have ever read anything by any of the above-named that wasn't really good. Also enjoyed Blackwood's "The Willows" in the mag, even though I'd read it. Machen's "Novel of the Black Seal" I'd previously read but did not recognize it till I noticed Hexecontalitho, alias Ixaxar, mentioned. England's "Afterglow" wasn't half-bad, even though the style seemed to be a bit old-fashioned, in the Dec. '41 issue. Y'know, my main regret is that I didn't discover F.F.M. until just before being inducted, three years ago, and F.N. not at all, since I've seen it so favorably mentioned in so many letters in those back F.F.M.'s.

I have the Dec. '41 F.F.M. and June '46 F.F.M. and the following *Weird Tales:* July, '43, Nov. '45, March '46, May '46, July '46. I had about a dozen more of the two until my above-mentioned chum visited me, and relieved me of them, the big stiff! I also have July, Nov., and Dec. '42 F.F.M., but won't have the chance to read them for two or three weeks more, as I have so many current issues of many mags to read first. That also goes for the Jan. '46 *Weird Tales.* Anyone interested can write me for terms.

PFC E. A. SHLIVEK.

614 E. 16th St.,
Brooklyn 26, N. Y.

KERRUISH STORY OKAY

Ever since I have been reading your magazine since I discovered it a few issues ago, I have gotten much enjoyment from it. The latest story, "The Undying Monster," was the best story I have ever read in fiction magazines. You had me completely baffled until the end of the story. I didn't have the slightest suspicion of what the Monster was. The cover was a perfect illustration for the story. Keep up the good work.

ROBERT VANDEN HEUVEL.

109 Mt. View Ave.,
Staten Island 2,
New York.

"MONSTER" ENJOYABLE

I have just finished the novel, "The Undying Monster." Like most of your stories, I enjoyed it very much. It certainly did differ from the feeble motion picture that came out of Hollywood several years ago. The story had so much more scope and imagination to it than the picture.

I think "The Undying Monster" differed quite a bit from your usual type of story. It was more weird and supernatural than fantastic. While I like both types of stories, F.F.M. is primarily a magazine of fantasy. I think most of your fans would want it kept that way. One or two supernatural stories a year would be appreciated, though.

Below, I list some stories I'd like to see:

1. Bram Stoker—"Lair of the White Worm," "Jewel of the Seven Stars." I do not think

(Continued on page 127)

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THE BURIAL OF THE RATS

By Bram Stoker

Swiftly, silently, his unseen enemies closed in around him in the inky darkness, a cordon of death marked out in sinister, shapeless shadows—awaiting the signal to spring. . . .

LEAVING Paris by the Orleans road, cross the Enciente, and, turning to the right, you find yourself in a somewhat wild and not at all savory district. Right and left, before and behind, on every side rise great heaps of dust and waste accumulated by the process of time.

Paris has its night as well as its day life, and the sojourner who enters his hotel in the Rue de Rivoli or the Rue St. Honore late at night or leaves it early in the morning, can guess, in coming near Montrouge—if he has not done so already—the purpose of those great wagons that look like boilers on wheels which he finds halting everywhere as he passes.

Every city has its peculiar institutions created out of its own needs; and one of the most notable institutions of Paris is its rag-picking population. In the early morning—and Parisian life commences at an early hour—may be seen in most streets standing on the pathway opposite every court and alley and between every few houses, as still in some American cities, even in parts of New York, large wooden boxes into which the domestics or tenement-holders empty the accumulated dust of the past day.

Round these boxes gather and pass on, when the work is done, to fresh fields of labor and pastures new, squalid, hungry-looking men and women, the implements of whose craft consist of a coarse bag or basket slung over the shoulder and a little rake with which they turn over and probe and examine in the minutest manner the dustbins. They pick up and deposit in their baskets, by aid of their rakes, whatever they may find, with the same facility as a Chinaman uses his chopsticks.

Paris is a city of centralization—and centralization and classification are closely allied. In the early times, when centralization is becoming a fact, its forerunner is classification. All things which are similar or analogous become grouped together, and from the grouping of groups rises one whole or central point. We see radiating many long arms with innumerable tentaculæ, and in the center rises a gigantic head with a comprehensive brain and keen eyes to look on every side and ears sensitive to hear—and a voracious mouth to swallow.

Other cities resemble all the birds and beasts and fishes whose appetites and digestions are normal. Paris alone is the analogical apotheosis of the octopus. Product of centralization carried along *ad absurdum*, it fairly represents the devil fish; and in no respects is the resemblance more curious than in the similarity of the digestive apparatus.

Those intelligent tourists who, having surrendered their individuality into the hands of Messrs. Cook or Gaze, "do" Paris

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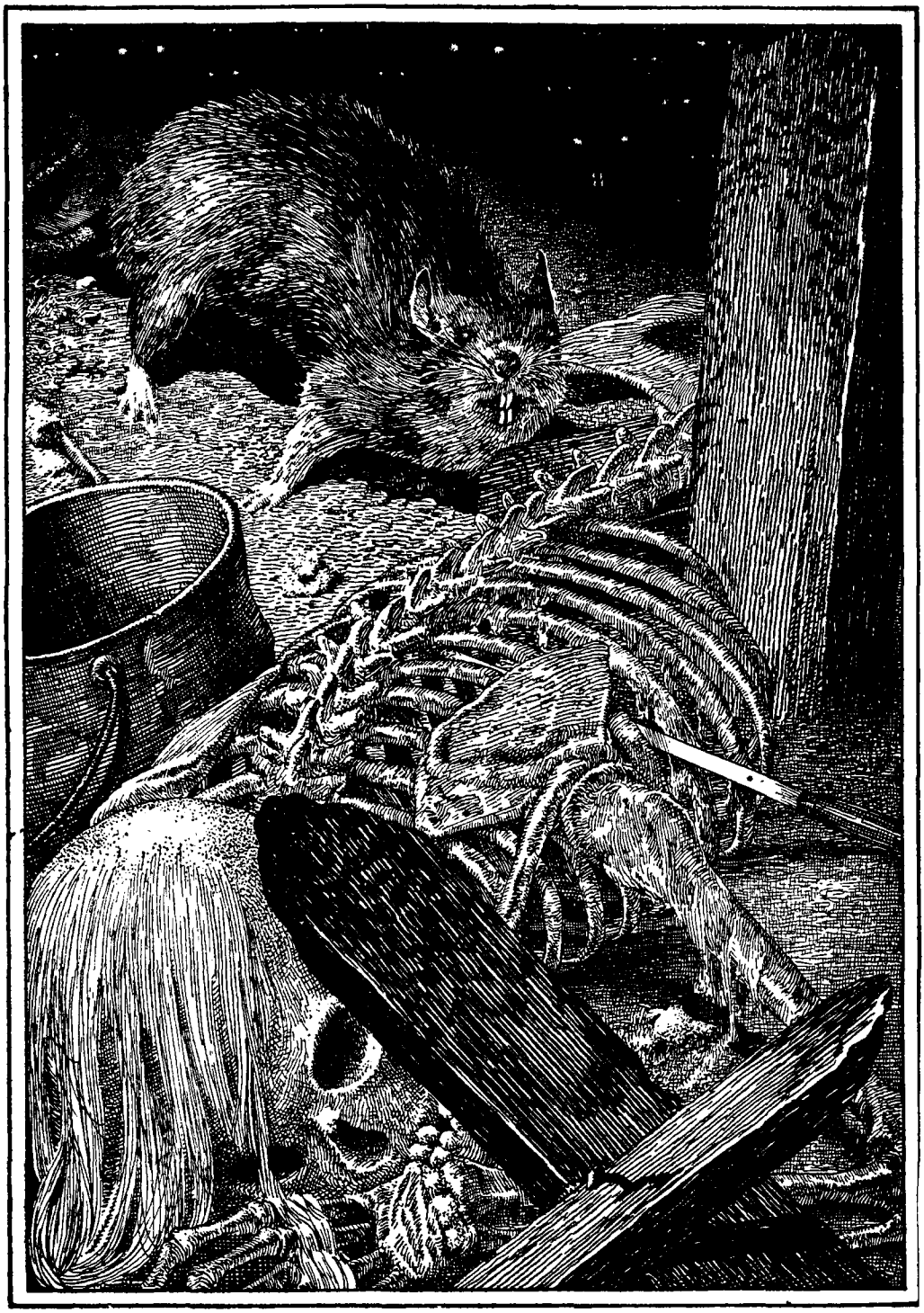

The skeleton was that of a woman—the long spike-like dagger had its keen point buried in the spine.

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in three days, are often puzzled to know how it is that the dinner which in London would cost about six shillings, can be had for three francs in a café in the Palais Royal. They need have no more wonder if they will but consider the classification which is a theoretic specialty of Parisian life, and adopt all round the fact from which the chiffonier has his genesis.

The Paris of 1850 was not like the Paris of today, and those who see the Paris of Napoleon and Baron Hausseman can hardly realize the existence of the state of things forty-five years ago.

Amongst other things, however, which have not changed are those districts where the waste is gathered. Dust is dust all the world over, in every age, and the family likeness of dust-heaps is perfect. The traveler, therefore, who visits the environs of Montrouge can go back in fancy without difficulty to the year 1850.

In this year I was making a prolonged stay in Paris. I was very much in love with a young lady who, though she returned my passion, so far yielded to the wishes of her parents that she had promised not to see me or to correspond with me for a year. I, too, had been compelled to accede to these conditions under a vague hope of parental approval. During the term of probation I had promised to remain out of the country and not to write to my dear one until the expiration of the year.

Naturally the time went heavily with me. There was no one of my own family or circle who could tell me of Alice, and none of her own folk had, I am sorry to say, sufficient generosity to send me even an occasional word of comfort regarding her health and well-being. I spent six months wandering about Europe, but as I could find no satisfactory distraction in travel, I determined to come to Paris, where, at least, I would be within easy hail of London in case any good fortune should call me thither before the appointed time.

That "hope deferred maketh the heart sick" was never better exemplified than in my case, for in addition to the perpetual longing to see the face I loved there was always with me a harrowing anxiety lest some accident should prevent me showing Alice in due time that I had, throughout the long period of probation, been faithful to her trust and my own love.

Thus, every adventure which I undertook had a fierce pleasure of its own, for it was fraught with possible consequences greater than it would have ordinarily borne.

Like all travelers I exhausted the places of most interest in the first month of my stay, and was driven in the second month to look for amusement whithersoever I might. Having made sundry journeys to the better-known suburbs, I began to see that there was a *terra incognita,* in so far as the guide book was concerned, in the social wilderness lying between these attractive points. Accordingly I began to systemize my researches, and each day took up the thread of my exploration at the place where I had on the previous day dropped it.

IN PROCESS of time my wanderings led near Montrouge, and I saw that hereabouts lay the Ultima Thule of social exploration—a country as little known as that round the source of the White Nile. And so I determined to investigate philosophically the chiffonier—his habitat, his life, and his means of life.

The job was an unsavory one, difficult of accomplishment, and with little hope of adequate reward. However, despite reason, obstinacy prevailed, and I entered into my new investigation with a keener energy than I could have summoned to aid me in any investigation leading to any end valuable or worthy.

One day, late in a fine afternoon, toward the end of September, I entered the holy of holies of the city of dust. The place was evidently the recognized abode of a number of chiffoniers, for some sort of arrangement was manifested in the formation of the dust heaps near the road. I passed amongst these heaps, which stood like orderly sentries, determined to penetrate further and trace dust to its ultimate location.

As I passed I saw behind the dust heaps a few forms that flitted to and fro, evidently watching with interest the advent of any stranger in such a place. The district was like a small Switzerland, and as I went forward my tortuous course shut out the path behind me.

Presently I got into what seemed a small city or community of chiffoniers. There were a number of shanties or huts, such as may be met with in the remote parts of the Bog of Allan—rude places with wattled walls, plastered with mud and roofs of rude thatch made from stable refuse—such places as one would not like to enter for any consideration, and which even in water-color could only look picturesque if judiciously treated.

In the midst of these huts was one of the

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strangest adaptations—I cannot say habitations—I had ever seen. An immense old wardrobe, the colossal remnant of some boudoir of Charles VII, or Henry II, had been converted into a dwelling-house. The double doors lay open, so that the entire menage was open to public view. In the open half of the wardrobe was a common sitting-room of some four feet by six, in which sat, smoking their pipes round a charcoal brazier, no fewer than six old soldiers of the First Republic, with their uniforms torn and threadbare. Evidently they were of a *mauvais sujet* class; their bleary eyes and limp jaws told plainly of a common love of absinthe; and their eyes had that haggard, worn look which stamps the drunkard at his worst, and that look of slumbering ferocity which follows in the wake of drink. The other side stood as of old, with its shelves intact, save that they were cut to half their depth, and in each shelf of which there were six, was a bed made with rags and straw.

The half-dozen worthies who inhabited this structure looked at me curiously as I passed; and when I looked back after going a little way I saw their heads together in a whispered conference. I did not like the look of this at all, for the place was very lonely, and the men looked very, very villainous. However, I did not see any cause for fear, and went on my way, penetrating further and further into the Sahara. The way was tortuous to a degree, and from going round in a series of semicircles, as one goes in skating with the Dutch roll, I got rather confused with regard to the points of the compass.

When I had penetrated a little way I saw, as I turned the corner of a half-made heap, sitting on a heap of straw an old soldier with threadbare coat.

"Hallo!" said I to myself; "the First Republic is well represented here in its soldiery."

As I passed him the old man never even looked up at me, but gazed on the ground with stolid persistency. Again I remarked to myself; "See what a life of rude warfare can do! This old man's curiosity is a thing of the past."

When I had gone a few steps, however, I looked back suddenly, and saw that curiosity was not dead, for the veteran had raised his head and was regarding me with a queer expression. He seemed to me to look like one of the six worthies in the press. When he saw me looking he lowered his head; and without thinking further of him I went on my way, satisfied that there was a strange likeness between these old warriors.

Presently I met another old soldier in a similar manner. He, too, did not notice me while I was passing.

By this time it was getting late in the afternoon, and I began to think of retracing my steps. Accordingly I turned to go back, but could see a number of tracks leading between different mounds and could not ascertain which of them I should take. In my perplexity I wanted to see someone of whom to ask the way, but could see no one. I determined to go on a few mounds further and so try to see someone—not a veteran.

I gained my object, for after going a couple of hundred yards I saw before me a single shanty such as I had seen before—with, however, the difference that this was not one for living in, but merely a roof with three walls open in front. From the evidence which the neighborhood exhibited I took it to be a place for sorting. Within it was an old woman wrinkled and bent with age; I approached her to ask the way.

She rose as I came close and I asked her my way. She immediately commenced a conversation; and it occurred to me that here in the very center of the Kingdom of Dust was the place to gather details of the history of Parisian rag-picking—particularly as I could do so from the lips of one who looked like the oldest inhabitant.

I began my inquiries, and the old woman gave me most interesting answers—she had been one of the ceteuces who sat daily before the guillotine and had taken an active part among the women who signalized themselves by their violence in the revolution. While we were talking she said suddenly: "But m'sieur must be tired standing," and dusted a rickety old stool for me to sit down. I hardly liked to do so for many reasons; but the poor old woman was so civil that I did not like to run the risk of hurting her by refusing, and moreover the conversation of one who had been at the taking of the Bastille was so interesting that I sat down and so our conversation went on.

While we were talking an old man—older and more bent and wrinkled even than the woman—appeared from behind the shanty. "Here is Pierre," said she. "M'sieur can hear stories now if he wishes, for Pierre was in everything, from the Bastille to Waterloo." The old man took another stool at my request and we plunged into a sea of revolutionary reminis-

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censes. This old man, albeit clothed like a scarecrow, was like any one of the six veterans.

I was now sitting in the center of the low hut with the woman on my left hand and the man on my right, each of them being somewhat in front of me. The place was full of all sorts of curious objects of lumber, and of many things that I wished far away. In one corner was a heap of rags which seemed to move from the number of vermin it contained, and in the other a heap of bones whose odor was something shocking. Every now and then, glancing at the heaps, I could see the gleaming eyes of some of the rats which infested the place.

These loathsome objects were bad enough, but what looked even more dreadful was an old butcher's ax with an iron handle stained with clots of blood leaning up against the wall on the right-hand side. Still these things did not give me much concern. The talk of the two old people was so fascinating that I stayed on and on, till evening came and the dust heaps threw dark shadows over the vales between them.

AFTER a time I began to grow uneasy, I couldn't tell how or why, but somehow I did not feel satisfied. Uneasiness is an instinct and means warning. The psychic faculties are often the sentries of the intellect; and when they sound alarm the reason begins to act, although perhaps not consciously.

This was so with me. I began to bethink me where I was and by what surrounded, and to wonder how I should fare in case I should be attacked; and then the thought suddenly burst upon me, although without any overt cause, that I was in danger. Prudence whispered: "Be still and make no sign," and so I was still and made no sign, for I knew that four cunning eyes were upon me. Four eyes—if not more. My God, what a horrible thought! The whole shanty might be surrounded on three sides with villains! I might be in the midst of a band of such desperadoes as only half a century of periodic revolution can produce.

With a sense of danger my intellect and observation quickened, and I grew more watchful than was my wont. I noticed that the old woman's eyes were constantly wandering toward my hands. I looked at them too, and saw the cause—my rings. On my left little finger I had a large signet and on the right a good diamond.

I thought that if there was any danger my first care was to avert suspicion. Accordingly I began to work the conversation round to rag-picking—to the drains—of the things found there; and so by easy stages to jewels. Then, seizing a favorable opportunity, I asked the old woman if she knew anything of such things. She answered that she did, a little. I held out my right hand, and, showing her the diamond, asked her what she thought of that. She answered that her eyes were bad, and stooped over my hand. I said as nonchalantly as I could: "Pardon me! You will see better thus!" and taking it off handed it to her. An unholy light came into her withered old face, as she touched it. She stole one glance at me swift and keen as a flash of lightning.

She bent over the ring for a moment, her face quite concealed as though examining it. The old man looked straight out of the front of the shanty before him, at the same time fumbling in his pockets and producing a screw of tobacco in a paper and a pipe, which he proceeded to fill. I took advantage of the pause and the momentary rest from the searching eyes on my face to look carefully round the place, now dim and shadowy in the gloaming.

There still lay all the heaps of varied reeking foulness; there the terrible blood-stained ax leaning against the wall in the right-hand corner, and everywhere, despite the gloom, the baleful glitter of the eyes of the rats. I could see them even through some of the chinks of the boards at the back low down close to the ground. But stay! these latter eyes seemed more than usually large and bright and baleful!

For an instant my heart stood still, and I felt in that whirling condition of mind in which one feels a sort of spiritual drunkenness, and as though the body is only maintained erect in that there is no time for it to fall before recovery. Then, in another second, I was calm—coldly calm, with all my energies in full vigor, with a self-control which I felt to be perfect and with all my feeling and instincts alert.

Now I knew the full extent of my danger: I was watched and surrounded by desperate people! I could not even guess at how many of them were lying there on the ground behind the shanty, waiting for the moment to strike. I knew that I was big and strong, and they knew it, too. They knew also, as I did, that I was an Englishman and would make a fight for it; and so we waited. I had, I felt, gained

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an advantage in the last few seconds, for I knew my danger and understood the situation. Now, I thought, is the test of my courage—the enduring test: the fighting test may come later!

THE old woman raised her head and said to me in a satisfied kind of way:

"A very fine ring, indeed—a beautiful ring! Oh, me! I once had such rings, plenty of them, and bracelets and earrings! Oh! for in those fine days I led the town a dance! But they've forgotten me now! They've forgotten me! They? Why they never heard of me! Perhaps their grandfathers remember me, some of them!" and she laughed a harsh, croaking laugh. And then I am bound to say that she astonished me, for she handed me back the ring with a certain suggestion of old-fashioned grace which was not without its pathos.

The old man eyed her with a sort of sudden ferocity, half rising from his stool, and said to me suddenly and hoarsely:

"Let me see!"

I was about to hand the ring over when the old woman said:

"No! no, do not give it to Pierre! Pierre is eccentric. He loses things; and such a pretty ring!"

"Cat!" said the old man, savagely. Suddenly the old woman said, rather more loudly than was necessary:

"Wait! I shall tell you something about a ring." There was something in the sound of her voice that jarred upon me. Perhaps it was my hypersensitiveness, wrought up as I was to such a pitch of nervous excitement, but I seemed to think that she was not addressing me. As I stole a glance round the place I saw the eyes of the rats in the bone heaps, but missed the eyes along the back. But even as I looked I saw them again appear. The old woman's "Wait!" had given me a respite from attack, and the men had sunk back to their reclining posture.

"I once lost a ring—a beautiful diamond hoop that had belonged to a queen, and which was given to me by a farmer of the taxes, who afterwards cut his throat because I sent him away. I thought it must have been stolen, and taxed my people; but I could get no trace. The police came and suggested that it had found its way to the drain. We descended—I in my fine clothes, for I would not trust them with my beautiful ring! I know more of the drains since then, and of rats, too! but I shall never forget the horror of that place—alive with blazing eyes, a wall of them just outside the light of our torches. Well, we got beneath my house. We searched the outlet of the drain, and there in the filth found my ring, and we came out.

"But we found something else also befor we came! As we were coming toward the opening a lot of sewer rats—human ones this time—came toward us. They told the police that one of their number had gone into the drain, but had not returned. He had gone in only shortly before we did, and, if lost, could hardly be far off. They asked help to seek him, so we turned back. They tried to prevent me going, but I insisted. It was a new excitement, and had I not recovered my ring?

"Not far did we go till we came on something. There was but little water, and the bottom of the drain was raised with brick, rubbish, and much matter of the kind. He had made a fight for it, even when his torch had gone out. But they were too many for him! They had not been long about it! The bones were still warm; but they were picked clean. They had even eaten their own dead ones and there were bones of rats as well as of the man. They took it cool enough those others—the human ones—and joked of their comrade when they found him dead, though they would have helped him living. Bah! what matters it—life or death?"

"And had you no fear?" I asked her.

"Fear!" she said with a laugh. "Me have fear? Ask Pierre! But I was younger then, and, as I came through that horrible drain with its wall of greedy eyes, always moving with the circle of the light from the torches, I did not feel uneasy. I kept on before the men, though! It is a way I have! I never let the men get before me. All I want is a chance and a means! And they ate him up—took every trace away except the bones; and no one knew it, nor no sound of him was ever heard!" Here she broke into a chuckling fit of the ghastliest merriment which it was ever my lot to hear and see. A great poetess describes her heroine singing: "Oh! to see or hear her singing! Scarce I know which is the divinest."

And I can apply the same idea to the old crone—in all save the dignity, for I scarce could tell which was the most hellish—the harsh, malicious, satisfied, cruel laugh, or the leering grin, and the horrible square opening of the mouth like a tragic mask, and the yellow gleam of the few discolored teeth in the shapeless gums. In that laugh and with that grin and the

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chuckling satisfaction I knew as well as if it had been spoken to me in words of thunder that my murder was settled, and the murderers only bided the proper time for its accomplishment. I could read between the lines of her gruesome story the commands to her accomplices. "Wait," she seemed to say, "bide your time. I shall strike the first blow. Find the weapon for me, and I shall make the opportunity! He shall not escape! Keep him quiet, and then no one will be the wiser. There will be no outcry, and the rats will do their work!"

It was growing darker and darker; the night was coming. I stole a glance round the shanty, still all the same! The bloody ax in the corner, the heaps of filth, and the eyes on the bone heaps and the crannies of the floor.

Pierre had been still ostensibly filling his pipe; he now struck a light and began to puff away at it. The old woman said:

"Dear heart, how dark it is! Pierre, like a good lad, light the lamp!"

Pierre got up and with the lighted match in his hand touched the wick of a lamp which hung at one side of the entrance to the shanty, and which had a reflector that threw light all over the place. It was evidently that which was used for their sorting at night.

"Not that, stupid! Not that! The lantern!" she called out to him.

He immediately blew it out, saying: "All right, mother, I'll find it," and he hustled about the left corner of the room —the old woman saying through the darkness:

"The lantern! the lantern! Oh! That is the light that is most useful to us poor folks. The lantern was the friend of the revolution! It is the friend of the chiffonier! It helps us when all else fails."

Hardly had she said the word when there was a kind of creaking of the whole place, and something was steadily dragging over the roof.

Again I seemed to read between the lines of her words. I knew the lesson of the lantern.

"One of you get on the roof with a noose and strangle him as he passes out if we fail within."

As I looked out of the opening I saw a loop of rope outlined black against the lurid sky. I was now, indeed, beset!

PIERRE was not long in finding the lantern. I kept my eyes fixed through the darkness on the old woman. Pierre struck his light, and by its flash I saw the old woman raise from the ground beside her where it had mysteriously appeared, and then hide in the folds of her gown, a long sharp knife or dagger. It seemed to be like a butcher's sharpening iron fixed to a keen point.

The lantern was lit.

"Bring it here, Pierre," she said. "Place it in the doorway where we can see it. See how nice it is! It shuts out the darkness from us; it is just right!"

Just right for her and her purposes! It threw all of its light on my face, leaving in gloom the faces of both Pierre and the old woman, who sat outside of me on each side.

I felt that the time of action was approaching; but I knew now that the first signal and movement would come from the woman, and so watched her.

I was unarmed, but I had made up my mind what to do. At the first movement I would seize the butcher's ax in the right-hand corner and fight my way out. At least, I would die hard. I stole a glance round to fix its exact locality so that I could not fail to seize it at the first effort, for then, if ever, time and accuracy would be precious.

Good God! It was gone! All the horror of the situation burst upon me; but the bitterest thought of all was that if the issue of the terrible position should be against me Alice would infallibly suffer. Either she would believe me false—and any lover, or any one who has ever been one, can imagine the bitterness of the thought—or else she would go on loving long after I had been lost to her and to the world, so that her life would be broken and embittered, shattered with disappointment and despair. The very magnitude of the pain braced me up and nerved me to bear the dread scrutiny of the plotters.

I think I did not betray myself. The old woman was watching me as a cat does a mouse; she had her right hand hidden in the folds of her gown, clutching, I knew, that long, cruel-looking dagger. Had she seen any disappointment in my face she would, I felt, have known that the moment had come, and would have sprung on me like a tigress, certain of taking me unprepared.

I looked out into the night, and there I saw new cause for danger. Before and around the hut were at a little distance some shadowy forms; they were quite still, but I knew that they were all alert

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and on guard. Small chance for me now in that direction.

Again I stole a glance round the place. In moments of great excitement and of great danger, which is excitement, the mind works very quickly, and the keenness of the faculties which depend on the mind grows in proportion. I now felt this. In an instant I took in the whole situation. I saw that the ax had been taken through a small hole in one of the rotten boards. How rotten they must be to allow such a thing being done without a particle of noise.

The hut was a regular murder-trap, and was guarded all around. A garroter lay on the roof ready to entangle me with his noose if I should escape the dagger of the old hag. In front the way was guarded by I know not how many watchers. And at the back was a row of desperate men—I had seen their eyes still through the crack in the boards of the floor, when last I looked—as they lay prone waiting for the signal to start erect. If it was to be ever, now for it!

As nonchalantly as I could I turned slightly on my stool so as to get my right leg well under me. Then with a sudden jump, turning my head, and guarding it with my hands, and with the fighting instinct of the knights of old, I breathed my lady's name and hurled myself against the back wall of the hut.

Watchful as they were, the suddenness of my movement surprised both Pierre and the old woman. As I crashed through the rotten timbers I saw the old woman rise with a leap like a tiger and heard her low gasp of baffled rage. My feet lit on something that moved, and as I jumped away I knew that I had stepped on the back of one of the row of men lying on their faces outside the hut. I was torn with nails and splinters, but otherwise unhurt. Breathless I rushed up the mound in front of me, hearing as I went the dull crash of the shanty as it collapsed into a mass.

It was a nightmare climb. The mound, though but low, was awfully steep, and with each step I took the mass of dust and cinders tore down with me and gave way under my feet. The dust choked me; it was sickening, foetid, awful; but my climb was, I felt, for life or death, and I struggled on. The seconds seemed hours; but the few moments I had in starting, combined with my youth and strength, gave me a great advantage, and though several forms struggled after me in deadly silence which was more dreadful than any sound, I easily reached the top. Since then I have climbed the cone of Vesuvius, and as I struggled up that dreary steep amid the sulphurous fumes the memory of that awful night at Montrouge came back to me so vividly that I almost grew faint.

The mound was one of the tallest in the region of dust, and as I struggled to the top, panting for breath and with my heart beating like a sledge hammer, I saw away to my left the dull red gleam of the sky, and nearer still the flashing of lights. Thank God! I knew where I was now and where lay the road to Paris!

For two or three seconds I paused and looked back. My pursuers were still well behind me, but struggling up resolutely, and in deadly silence. Beyond, the shanty was a wreck—a mass of timber and moving forms. I could see it well, for flames were already bursting out; the rags and straw had evidently caught fire from the lantern. Still silence there! Not a sound! These old wretches could die game, anyhow.

I had no time for more than a passing glance, for as I cast an eye round the mound preparatory to making my descent I saw several dark forms rushing round on either side to cut me off on my way. It was now a race for life. They were trying to head me on my way to Paris, and with the instinct of the moment I dashed down to the right-hand side. I was just in time, for, though I came as it seemed to me down the steep in a very few steps, the wary old men who were watching me turned back, and one, as I rushed by into the opening between the two mounds in front, almost struck me a blow with that terrible butcher's ax. There could surely not be two such weapons about!

Then began a really horrible chase. I easily ran ahead of the old men, and even when some younger ones and a few women joined in the hunt I easily distanced them. But I did not know the way, and I could not even guide myself by the light in the sky, for I was running away from it.

I had heard that, unless of conscious purpose, hunted men turn always to the left, and so I found it now; and so, I suppose knew also my pursuers, who were more animals than men, and with cunning or instinct had found out such secrets for themselves: for on finishing a quick spurt, after which I intended to take a moment's breathing space, I suddenly saw ahead of me two or three forms swiftly passing behind a mound to the right.

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I WAS in the spider's web now indeed! But with the thought of this new danger came the resource of the hunted, and so I darted down the next turning to the right. I continued in this direction for some hundred yards, and then, making a turn to the left again, felt certain that I had, at any rate, avoided the danger of being surrounded.

But not of pursuit, for on came the rabble after me, steady, dogged, relentless, and still in grim silence.

In the greater darkness the mounds semed now to be somewhat smaller than before, although—for the night was closing—they looked bigger in proportion. I was now well ahead of my pursuers, so I made a dart up the mound in front.

Oh joy of joys! I was close to the edge of this inferno of dustheaps. Away behind me the red light of Paris in the sky, and towering up behind rose the heights of Montmartre—a dim light, with here and there brilliant points like stars.

Restored to vigor in a moment, I ran over the few remaining mounds of decreasing size, and found myself on the level land beyond. Even then, however, the prospect was not inviting. All before me was dark and dismal, and I had evidently come to one of those dank, low-lying waste places which are found here and there in the neighborhood of great cities. Places of waste and desolation, where the space is required for the ultimate agglomeration of all that is noxious, and the ground is so poor as to create no desire of occupancy even in the lowest squatter.

With eyes accustomed to the gloom of the evening, and away now from the shadows of those dreadful dustheaps, I could see much more easily than I could a little while ago. It might have been, of course, that the glare in the sky of the lights of Paris, though the city was some miles away, was reflected here. Howsoever it was, I saw well enough to take my bearings for certainty some little distance around me.

In front was a bleak, flat waste that seemed almost dead level, with here and there the dark shimmering of stagnant pools. Seemingly far off on the right, amid a small cluster of scattered lights, rose a dark mass of Fort Montrouge, and away to the left in the dim distance, pointed with stray gleams from cottage windows, the lights in the sky showed the locality of Bicêtre. A moment's thought decided me to take the right and try to reach Montrouge. There at least would be some sort of safety, and I might possibly long before come on some of the cross roads which I knew. Somewhere, not far off, must lie the strategic road made to connect the outlying chain of forts circling the city.

Then I looked back. Coming over the mounds, and outlined black against the glare of the Parisian horizon, I saw several moving figures, and still away to the right several more deploying out between me and my destination. They evidently meant to cut me off in this direction, and so my choice became constricted; it lay now between going straight ahead or turning to the left. Stooping to the ground, so as to get the advantage of the horizon as a line of sight, I looked carefully in this direction, but could detect no sign of my enemies. I argued that as they had not guarded or were not trying to guard that point, there was evidently danger to me there already. So I made up my mind to go straight on before me.

It was not an inviting prospect, and as I went on the reality grew worse. The ground became soft and oozy, and now and again gave way beneath me in a sickening kind of way. I seemed somehow to be going down, for I saw around me places seemingly more elevated than where I was, and this in a place which from a little way back seemed dead level. I looked around, but could see none of my pursuers. This was strange, for all along these birds of the night had been following me through the darkness as well as though it were now daylight. How I blamed myself for coming out in my light-colored tourist suit of tweed.

The silence, and my not being able to see my enemies, while I felt that they were watching me, grew appalling, and in the hope of some one not of this ghastly crew hearing me I raised my voice and shouted several times. There was not the slightest response; not even an echo rewarded my efforts. For a while I stood stock still and kept my eyes in one direction. On one of the rising places around me I saw something dark move along, then another, and another. This was to my left, and seemingly moving to head me off.

I thought that again I might with my skill as a runner elude my enemies at this game, and so with all my speed darted forward.

Splash!

My feet had given way in a mass of slimy rubbish, and I had fallen headlong into a

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reeking, stagnant pool. The water and the mud in which my arms sank up to the elbows were filthy and nauseous beyond description, and in the suddenness of my fall I had actually swallowed some of the filthy stuff, which nearly choked me, and made me gasp for breath. Never shall I forget the moments during which I stood trying to recover myself, almost fainting from the foetid odor of the filthy pool, whose white mist rose ghostlike around. Worst of all, with the acute despair of the hunted animal when he sees the pursuing pack closing on him, I saw before my eyes while I stood helpless the dark forms of my pursuers moving swiftly to surround me.

It is curious how our minds work on odd matters even when the energies of thought are seemingly concentrated on some terrible and pressing need. I was in momentary peril of my life: my safety depended on my action, and my choice of alternatives coming now with almost every step I took, and yet I could not but think of the strange dogged persistency of these old men. Their silent resolution, their steadfast, grim persistency even in such a cause commanded, as well as fear, even a measure of respect. What must they have been in the vigor of their youth? I could understand now that whirlwind rush on the bridge of Arcola, that scornful exclamation of the Old Guard at Waterloo! Unconscious cerebration has its own pleasures, even at such moments; but fortunately it does not in any way clash with the thought from which action springs.

I REALIZED at a glance that so far I was defeated in my object, my enemies as yet had won. They had succeeded in surrounding me on three sides, and were bent on driving me off to the left-hand, where there was already some danger ahead of me, for they had left no guard. I accepted the alternative—it was a case of Hobson's choice and run. I had to keep to the lower ground, for my pursuers were on the higher places.

However, though the ooze and broken ground impeded me, my youth and training made me able to hold my ground, and by keeping a diagonal line I not only kept them from gaining on me, but even began to distance them. This gave me new heart and strength, and by this time habitual training was beginning to tell and my second wind had come.

Before me the ground rose slightly: I rushed up the slope and found before me a waste of watery slime, with a low dyke or bank looking black and grim beyond. I felt that if I could but reach that dyke in safety I could there, with solid ground under my feet and some kind of path to guide me, find with comparative ease a way out of my troubles. After a glance right and left and seeing no one near, I kept my eyes for a few minutes to their rightful work of aiding my feet while I crossed the swamp. It was rough, hard work, but there was little danger, merely toil; and a short time took me to the dyke. I rushed up the slope exulting; but here again I met a new shock. On either side of me rose a number of crouching figures. From right and left they rushed at me. Each body held a rope.

The cordon was nearly complete. I could pass on neither side, and the end was near.

There was only one chance, and I took it. I hurled myself across the dyke, and escaping out of the very clutches of my foes, threw myself into the stream.

At any other time I should have thought that water foul and filthy, but now it was as welcome as the most crystal stream to the parched traveler. It was a highway of safety!

My pursuers rushed after me. Had only one of them held the rope it would have been all up with me, for he could have entangled me before I had time to swim a stroke; but the many hands holding it embarrassed and delayed them, and when the rope struck the water I heard a splash well behind me. A few minutes' hard swimming took me across the stream. Refreshed with the immersion and encouraged by the escape, I climbed the dyke in comparative gaiety of spirits.

From the top I looked back. Through the darkness I saw my assailants scattering up and down along the dyke. The pursuit was evidently not ended, and again I had to choose my course. Beyond the dyke where I stood was a wild, swampy space very similar to that which I had crossed. I determined to shun such a place, and thought for a moment whether I would take up or down the dyke. I thought I heard a sound—the muffled sound of oars, so I listened, and then shouted.

No response; but the sound ceased. My enemies had evidently got a boat of some kind. As they were on the up side of me I took the down path and began to run. As I passed to the left of where I had entered the water I heard several splashes,

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soft and stealthy, like the sound a rat makes as he plunges into the stream, but vastly greater; and as I looked I saw the dark sheen of the water broken by the ripples of several advancing heads. Some of my enemies were swimming the stream also.

And now behind me, up the stream, the silence was broken by the quick rattle and creak of oars; my enemies were in hot pursuit. I put my best leg foremost and ran on. After a break of a couple of minutes I looked back, and by a gleam of light through the ragged clouds I saw several dark forms climbing the bank behind me. The wind had now begun to rise, and the water beside me was ruffled and beginning to break in tiny waves on the bank. I had to keep my eyes pretty well on the ground before me, lest I should stumble, for I knew that to stumble was death. After a few minutes I looked back behind me. On the dyke were only a few dark figures, but crossing the waste, swampy ground were many more. What new danger this portended I did not know—could only guess. Then as I ran it seemed to me that my track kept ever sloping away to the right. I looked up ahead and saw that the river was much wider than before, and that the dyke on which I stood fell quite away, and beyond it was another stream on whose near bank I saw some of the dark forms now across the marsh. I was on an island of some kind.

MY SITUATION was now indeed terrible, for my enemies had hemmed me in on every side. Behind came the quickening roll of oars, as though my pursuers knew that the end was close. Around me on every side was desolation; there was not a roof or light, as far as I could see. Far off to the right rose some dark mass, but what it was I knew not.

For a moment I paused to think what I should do, not for more, for my pursuers were drawing closer. Then my mind was made up. I slipped down the bank and took to the water. I struck out straight ahead, so as to gain the current by clearing the backwater of the island for such I presume it was, when I had passed into the stream. I waited till a cloud came driving across the moon and leaving all in darkness. Then I took off my hat and laid it softly on the water floating with the stream, and a second after dived to the right and struck out under water with all my might. I was, I suppose, half a minute under water, and when I rose came up as softly as I could, and turning, looked back. There went my light brown hat floating merrily away. Close behind it came a rickety old boat, driven furiously by a pair of oars. The moon was still partly obscured by the drifting clouds, but in the partial light I could see a man in the bows holding aloft ready to strike what appeared to me to be that same dreadful pole-ax which I had before escaped.

As I looked the boat drew closer, closer, and the man struck savagely. The hat disappeared. The man fell forward, almost out of the boat. His comrades dragged him in but without the ax, and then as I turned with all my energies bent on reaching the further bank, I heard the fierce whirr of the muttered *"Sacré!"* which marked the anger of my baffled pursuers.

That was the first sound I had heard from human lips during all this dreadful chase, and full as it was of menace and danger to me it was a welcome sound for it broke that awful silence which shrouded and appalled me. It was as an overt sign that my opponents were men and not ghosts, and that with them I had, at least, the chance of a man, though but one against many.

But now that the spell of silence was broken the sounds came thick and fast. From boat to shore and back from shore to boat came quick question and answer, all in the fiercest whispers. I looked back—a fatal thing to do—for in the instant someone caught sight of my face, which showed white on the dark water, and shouted. Hands pointed to me, and in a moment or two the rowboat was under way, and following hard after me. I had but a little way to go, but quicker and quicker came the boat after me. A few more strokes and I would be on the shore, but I felt the oncoming of the boat, and expected each second to feel the crash of an oar or other weapon on my head. Had I not seen that dreadful ax disappear in the water I do not think that I could have won the shore.

I heard the muttered curses of those not rowing and the labored breath of the rowers. With one supreme effort for life or liberty I touched the bank and sprang up it. There was not a single second to spare, for hard behind me the boat grounded and several dark forms sprang after me. I gained the top of the dyke, and keeping to the left ran on again. The boat put off and followed down the stream.

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Seeing this I feared danger in this direction, and quickly turning, ran down the dyke on the other side, and after passing a short stretch of marshy ground gained a wild, open flat country and sped on.

Still behind me came on my relentless pursuers. Far away, below me, I saw the same dark mass as before, but now grown closer and greater. My heart gave a great thrill of delight, for I knew that it must be the fortress of Bicêtre, and with new courage I ran on. I had heard that between each and all of the protecting forts of Paris there are strategic ways, deep sunk roads, where soldiers marching should be sheltered from the enemy. I knew that if I could gain this road I would be safe, but in the darkness I could not see any sign of it, so, in blind hope of striking it, I ran on.

Presently I came to the edge of a deep cut, and found that down below me ran a road guarded on each side by a ditch of water fenced on either side by a straight, high wall.

Getting fainter and dizzier, I ran on; the ground got more broken—more and more still, till I staggered and fell, and rose again, and ran on in the blind anguish of the hunted. Again the thought of Alice nerved me. I would not be lost and wreck her life: I would fight and struggle for life to the bitter end. With a great effort I caught the top of the wall. As, scrambling like a catamount, I drew myself up, I actually felt a hand touch the sole of my foot. I was now on a sort of causeway, and before me I saw a dim light. Blind and dizzy, I ran on, staggered, and fell, rising covered with dust.

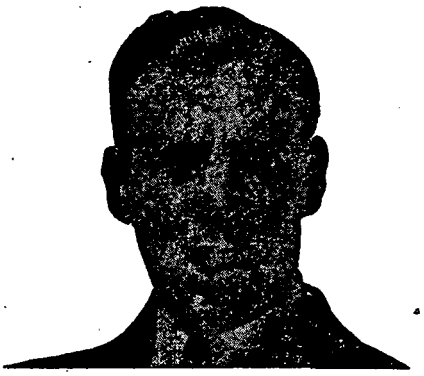
"Halt *là!*"

The words sounded like a voice from heaven. A blaze of light seemed to enwrap me, and I shouted with joy.

"Qui va là?" The rattle of musketry, the flash of steel before my eyes. Instinctively I stopped, though close behind me came a rush of my pursuers.

Another word or two, and out from a gateway poured, as it seemed to me, a tide of red and blue, as the guard turned out. All around seemed blazing with light, and the flash of steel, the clink and rattle of arms, and the loud, harsh voices of command. As I fell forward, utterly exhausted, a soldier caught me. I looked back in dreadful expectation, and saw the mass of dark forms disappearing into the night. Then I must have fainted.

When I recovered my senses I was in



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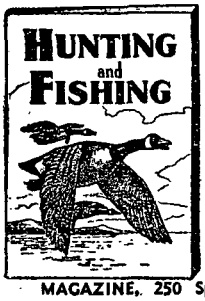

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the guard room. They gave me brandy, and after a while I was able to tell them something of what had passed. Then a commissary of police appeared, apparently out of the empty air, as is the way of the Parisian police officer. He listened attentively, and then had a moment's consultation with the officer in command. Apparently they were agreed, for they asked me if I were ready now to come with them.

"Where to?" I asked, rising to go.

"Back to the dust heaps. We shall, perhaps, catch them yet!"

"I shall try!" said I.

He eyed me for a moment keenly, and said suddenly:

"Would you like to wait a while or till tomorrow, young Englishman?" This touched me to the quick, as perhaps he intended, and I jumped to my feet.

"Come now!" I said: "now! now! An Englishman is always ready for his duty!"

The commissary was a good fellow, as well as a shrewd one; he slapped my shoulder kindly. "Brave *garçon!*" he said. "Forgive me, but I knew what would do you most good. The guard is ready. Come!"

AND so, passing right through the guard room, and through a long vaulted passage, we were out into the night. A few of the men in front had powerful lanterns. Through courtyards and down a sloping way we passed out through a low archway to a sunken road, the same that I had seen in my flight. The order was given to get at the double, and with a quick, springing stride, half run, half walk, the soldiers went swiftly along.

I felt my strength renewed again—such is the difference between hunter and hunted. A very short distance took us to a low-lying pontoon bridge across the stream, and evidently very little higher up than I had struck it. Some effort had evidently been made to damage it, for the ropes had all been cut, and one of the chains had been broken. I heard the officer say to the commissary:

"We are just in time! A few more minutes, and they would have destroyed the bridge. Forward, quicker still!" and on we went. Again we reached a pontoon on the winding stream; as we came up we heard the hollow boom of the metal drums as the efforts to destroy the bridge were again renewed. A word of command was given, and several men raised their rifles.

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"Fire!" A volley rang out. There was a muffled cry, and the dark forms dispersed. But the evil was done, and we saw the far end of the pontoon swing into the stream. This was a serious delay, and it was nearly an hour before we had renewed ropes and restored the bridge sufficiently to allow us to cross.

We renewed the chase. Quicker, quicker we went towards the dust heaps.

After a time we came to a place that I knew. There were the remains of a fire—a few smoldering wood ashes still cast a red glow, but the bulk of the ashes were cold. I knew the site of the hut and the hill behind it up which I had rushed, and in the flickering glow the eyes of the rats still shone with a sort of phosphorescence. The commissary spoke a word to the officer, and he cried:

"Halt!"

The soldiers were ordered to spread around and watch, and then we commenced to examine the ruins. The commissary himself began to lift away the charred boards and rubbish. These the soldiers took and piled together. Presently he started back, then bent down and rising beckoned me.

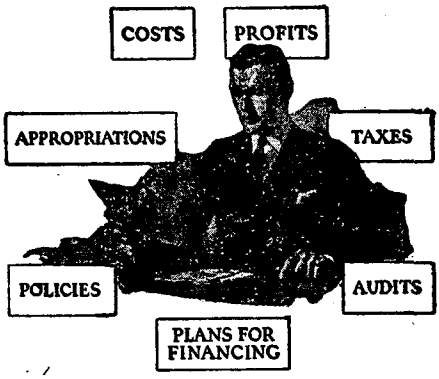
"See!" he said.

It was a gruesome sight. There lay a skeleton face downwards, a woman by the lines—an old woman by the coarse fiber of the bone. Between the ribs rose a long spike-like dagger made from a butcher's sharpening knife, its keen point buried in the spine.

"You will observe," said the commissary to the officer and to me as he took out his note book, "that the woman must have fallen on her dagger. The rats are many here—see their eyes glistening among that heap of bones—and you will also notice"—I shuddered as he placed his hand on the skeleton—"that but little time was lost by them, for the bones are scarcely cold!"

There was no other sign of any one near, living or dead; and so deploying again into line the soldiers passed on. Presently we came to the hut made of the old wardrobe. We approached. In five of the six compartments were sleeping old men—sleeping so soundly that even the glare of the lanterns did not wake them. Old and grim and grizzled they looked, with their gaunt, wrinkled bronzed faces and their white mustaches.

The officer called out harshly and loudly a word of command, and in an instant



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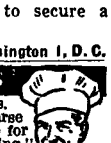

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each one of them was on his feet before us and standing at "attention"!

"What do you here?"

"We sleep," was the answer.

"Where are the other chiffoniers?" asked the commissary.

"Gone to work."

"And you?"

"We are on guard!"

"*Peste!*" laughed the officer grimly, as he looked at the old men one after the other in the face and added with cool deliberate cruelty, "Asleep on duty! Is this the manner of the Old Guard! No wonder, then, a Waterloo!"

By the gleam of the lantern I saw the grim old faces grow deadly pale, and almost shuddered at the look in the eyes of the old men as the laugh of the soldiers echoed the grim pleasantry of the officer.

I felt in that moment that I was in some measure avenged.

For a moment they looked as if they would throw themselves on the taunter, but years of their life had schooled them and they remained still.

"You are but five," said the commissary; "where is the sixth?" The answer came with a grim chuckle.

"He is there!" and the speaker pointed to the bottom of the wardrobe. "He died last night. You won't find much of him. The burial of the rats is quick!"

The commissary stooped and looked in. Then he turned to the officer and said calmly:

"We may as well go back. No trace here now; nothing to prove that man was the one wounded by your soldiers' bullets! Probably they murdered him to cover up the trace. See!" Again he stooped and placed his hands on the skeleton. "The rats work quickly and they are many. These bones are warm!"

I shuddered, and so did many more of those around me.

"Form!" said the officer, and so in marching order, with the lanterns swinging in front and the manacled veterans in the midst, with steady tramp we took ourselves out of the dust-heaps and turned backward to the fortress of Bicêtre.

My year of probation has long since ended, and Alice is my wife. But when I look back upon that trying twelvemonth one of the most vivid incidents that memory recalls is that associated with my visit to the City of Dust.

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THE READERS' VIEWPOINT

(Continued from page 111)

either has ever appeared in magazine form; 2. H. R. Haggard—many fine, out-of-print fantasies; 3. Conan Doyle—at least two or three fine supernatural novels; 4. Lovecraft—"Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath"; 5. Merritt—two brand new novels just recently published in book form; 6. W. H. Hodgson—"Men of the Deep Waters"; 7. Non-magazine works of Chesterton, Kline, Cummings, Rousseau, etc.

The art work in this issue was the best in a long time. Lawrence's drawing of the ship *Nagelfare* and its unholy crew is his best that I remember seeing. He certainly is improving!

PVT. LESTER MAYER.

Sec. 4, Wd. 17
Madigan General Hospital
Ft. Lewis, Washington.

PRAISE AND OTHERWISE

A good many English movies and stories present their audience with situations that must be accepted immediately or the balance of the epic is too unreal to be fully enjoyed. Such was the case when I read the "Undying Monster." The first portion of it contained some of the finest weird writing I have seen, but when the author brings in a person known as a Super-sensitive, and does it in a way that we are obliged to assume that such people are common and their word implicitly taken for granted as truth, I reach the end of the rope.

In spite of this, it must be admitted that the novel was quite interesting. Luna's paragraph on page 66, beginning with "There's nothing so actively alive as the dead," is a splendid example of one of better lines of fantasy and weird theology. After finishing the "Undying Monster," one can certainly see that Luna brought out the wolf in Oliver.

It was nice to find an editor who continually tries to give her readers what they ask for. Machen's piece from the "Three Impostors" was still as good as I had remembered it. A few of his longer novels would look well between F.F.M.'s covers. How about "Hill of Dreams"?

Lawrence has come out of his slump. Surely

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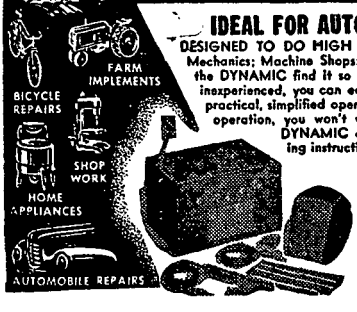

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FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES

the June issue's cover was a chilling affair and the best he's done to date. Here's a puzzler: Your letter columns are full of statements to the effect that Lawrence is almost as good as Finlay. Is that supposed to pass for a compliment? If so, how feeble! When each one's style is different. One can't really say which is best, but of late, the fine draftsmanship of Lawrence has shown a resemblance to the work of the pen and ink master, Franklin Booth, something to be desired to say the least.

R. I. MARTINI.

310 W. 66 St.,
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JUNE ISSUE FINE

"The Undying Monster" in the June issue was one of the finest stories in the genre of fantasy that it has ever been my pleasure to read. I saw the motion picture which was made from this story and it didn't begin to do it justice.

I would like to inform all who might be interested that I have available a copy of "The Outsider and Others" by H. P. Lovecraft. It is in good condition. The only defect is that it has my bookplate inside the front cover.

JULIAN MARION WILLIAMSON.

Box 190,
Talladega, Ala.

FROM ENGLAND

Taine's "Before the Dawn" was quite good, albeit it might, I think, have been improved if it had a more continuous story theme running through it; it was, however, like most of this author's works, interesting and thought-provoking. I should welcome more Taine.

I enjoyed, also, "The House of the Secret." This was a refreshing change from the prehistoric type of story which has been so abundantly represented in our mag since 1942.

The April number, while being a very welcome addition to my collection, was not received with the same unbounded enthusiasm, because, alas, I have already a copy of "Island of Captain Sparrow" (a first class story, though) on my bookshelves and have only recently read "The Willows." However, there will be, no doubt, many thousands of your readers to whom this issue will carry new and absorbing literature.

The idea of printing some of Haggard's stories seems quite sound; incidentally, I see someone suggesting Chambers' "Slayer of Souls." I have read this and quite enjoyed it.

Clyne's pic for "Roderick's Story," although good, was a little too much like his earlier efforts. He needs a little more variety in his style. I hope, though, that we can look for an early return of the master Finlay, especially for the covers. Lawrence is good, very good, but the older readers don't forget the

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sheer beauty and perfection of Finlay's 1940, '41, '42 masterpieces.

Finally, would it be possible to get inserted in the Viewpoint a request for the June, Sept. and Dec. 1945 numbers from any fan who cares to part with same, these being all I need to complete my files of F.F.M. and F.N.? The writer would also like a number of other S.F. and Fantasy mags (unobtainable during War), also S.F. books and scientific books, too many to list here.

Requests: monthly issue, trimmed edges, Finlay, a little "Paul" and "Bok," *Fantastic Novels* covering mag and book reprints, completion of Merritt's stories.

TOM HUGHES.

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INTERESTED?

The June F.F.M was really good. After I finished reading "The Undying Monster," the cold shivers were running up and down me. "The Island of Captain Sparrow" was not so good, and I liked "The Willows" much better. Haggard's "Ancient Allan" was a very welcome sight, and I hope we'll have more of his books soon. How about "Ayesha: The Return of She"?

If anyone is interested, I have some Burroughs' books which I would like to trade for some other fantasy stories. They are "Land of Terror" and "The War Chief." I also have "The Lost World" by A. Conan Doyle.

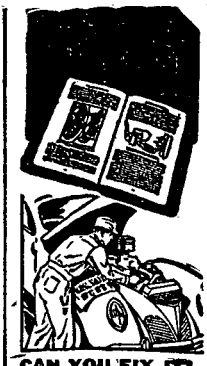
ETHELDRA DAVIS.

2 Lakeview Drive,
Tournapull, Georgia.

CANADIAN FANS, NOTE!

Have just recently finished the June issue of F.F.M., and hasten to congratulate you on a fine publication.

I am a new reader of F.F.M., bought my first one in April of this year, at my favorite newsstand. To tell the truth, I had never seen



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F.F.M. up till said month. Now I have a standing order for F.F.M.

I thought the "Undying Monster" was great, but I wish it had been a little shorter—Kerruish dragged it out for about eighty pages, then thought better about it and ended it abruptly—just like that! Otherwise, it was a magnificent manuscript and Kerruish should be congratulated on her knowledge of the countryside of Sussex and its Downs.

Would appreciate it much if I could get in touch with some reader or readers in Canada, who have any type of Fantastic, Weird, or Science mags to trade.

J. J. STAMP.

Norval,
Ontario, Canada.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

B-r-r-r-r, "The Undying Monster" gave me goose bumps on my goose bumps.

You sure know how to pick 'em. "Phra," "The Ancient Allan," "Before the Dawn"—

What I can't understand is why Hollywood hasn't snapped this story up long ago.

I have only one suggestion for a story and do not recall the original publishers. The original author is lost in Chinese antiquity. It is so long you would have to run it in about three parts, or better still, chapter by chapter in serial form in place of the short novel. If this has you puzzled, the title is "Monkey," an English translation of Chinese folk-lore. If you want something different, this is it.

DAN WILHITE.

P. O. Box 364,
Callendale, Ark.

PRAISE AND CRITICISM

"The Undying Monster" was disappointingly written. "The Island of Captain Sparrow" was rotten. The former was excellent until the ending—when the monster was actually a human with hereditary insanity.

Now for the praises; the other three stories are among the best I've ever read. "The Willows" was included in an anthology I bought last summer. The last time I read it was January, yet I got a new thrill re-reading it. Again, I relived that feeling of cosmic terror as Swede and the narrator told the tale of the man who was not a man, the otter who was not an otter, and of their trying to leave the camp site, but being unable to. So help me, I felt like screaming at them to leave that dream place. The author, Algernon Blackwood, is one of the few living "old masters" of fantasy. "The Novel of the Black Seal" is one of those that discourage living alone. Toward the end of it, I had to seek human companionship before continuing. Machen is another "old master."

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